Gov't deeply divided on how to deal with Iraq issue

Story on PAGE A2

SORI, PINA-TANGGAL KO NA ANG NUNAL KO!
PATINGIN! BAKA MERON PA!

Ping finds lady luck with mole

By Cynthia Balana

TO TEST a seer's prophecy about his winning the presidency, opposition Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson had to ask Senate

PING/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Task force investigating Kintanar slay dissolved

By Christian Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

JUST three weeks after it was created, the police task force assigned to go after the killers of Romulo Kintanar, former New People's Army chief, has been dissolved.

Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto, erstwhile head of Task Force Kintanar, said Philippine National Police Director Gen.

TASK/ A18

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Monday, February 17, 2003 ★★ 72 pages / 6 sections / vol. 18 / no. 71 P15
website: www.inq7.net

Millions march for peace

'Fight terror by creating more justice in world'

SOME eight million protesters took to the streets around the world over the weekend to send a single message to US President George W. Bush: Don't invade Iraq.

In what must have been the largest coordinated series of peace rallies in history, anti-war marchers in more than 600 towns and cities on six continents voiced their opposition to the plan by a US-led "coalition of the willing" to attack Iraq for not complying with a UN order to disarm.

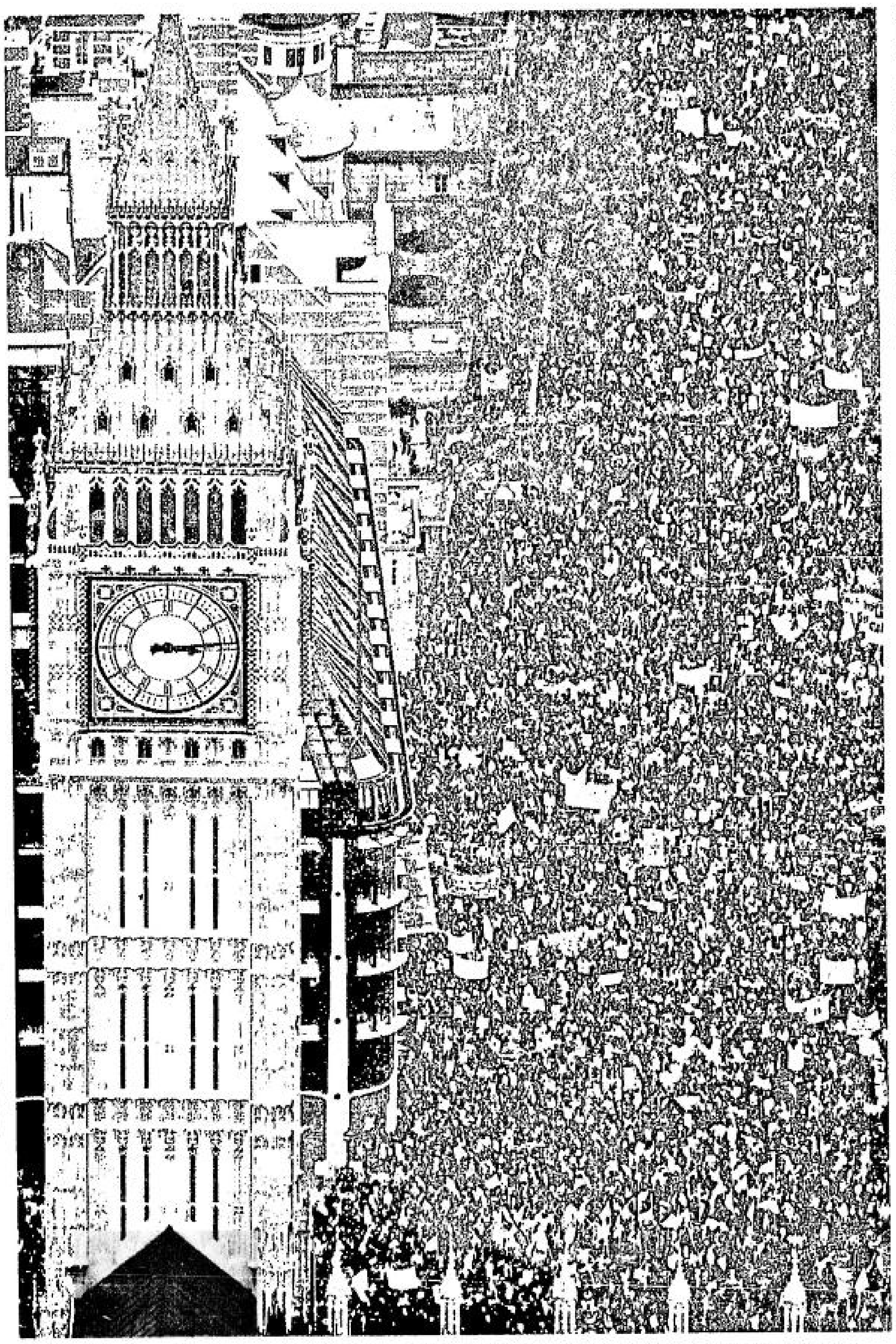
The combined estimates of rally organizers around the world put the total of protesters at some 11.5 million, but police and other official estimates suggested the total was about eight million. [Unless otherwise noted, the estimates that follow are from police or government sources.]

The massive protests, which started in Australia on Friday [Sydney time] and then wound its way around the world, complicate the efforts of the United States and Britain to win wide international support for a military campaign.

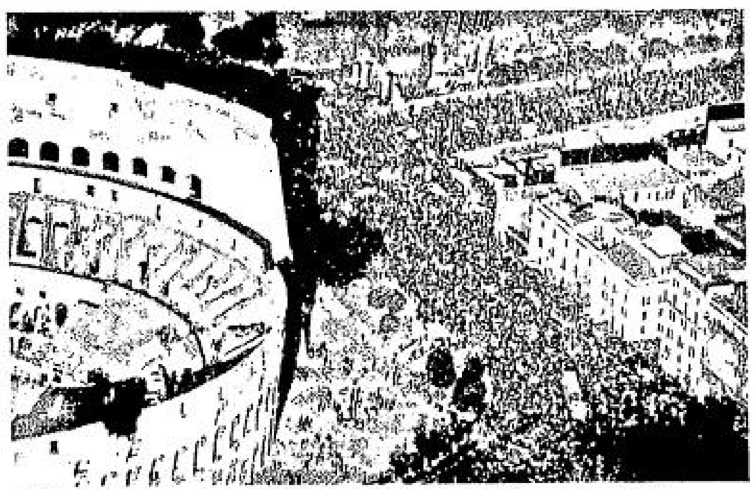
The biggest protests took place in countries whose governments staunchly support the US plan.

In Barcelona, Spain, as many as 1.3 million jammed the streets

MILLIONS/ A18



AN AERIAL view of the House of Parliament and the anti-war marchers in central London on Saturday. *(More photos on Page A18.)* AFP



BANNERS and rainbow peace flags flutter during a peace rally passing by the Colosseum in Rome. AFP

PROTESTERS carry an inflatable globe during an anti-war demonstration in New York City. GETTY IMAGES

Pinoys set record in aerobics

FOR SWEATING it out at the Rizal Park in Manila under the morning sun, more than 100,000 Filipinos yesterday set a new aerobics world record.

The mass aerobics surpassed the existing entry in the Guiness Book of World Records by at least 62,000.

Similar aerobics sessions were held simultaneously in other parts of the country, like Davao, Cebu and the Ilocos.

The Department of Health spearheaded the mass aerobics as part of the launching of the National Healthy Lifestyle campaign.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit,

PINOYS/ A19

US, UK face int'l isolation for war policy on Iraq

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE SECOND briefing of the UN arms inspectors to the Security Council on Friday crystallized the international isolation of the United States and Britain in their policy of rushing to war with Iraq.

The majority of the 15-member council aligned behind France in its call for more time for UN inspectors and for enlarging the inspection force. In an eloquent and passionate speech, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin set the tone for the rebuff of the United States, saying "real progress has been made" in the Feb. 14 inspection report of Hans Blix, chief UN inspector, since his Jan. 27 report.

De Villepin warned that a US attack on Iraq at this time was not justified yet, saying that prematurely resorting to war was fraught with risks.

Only Britain and Spain backed

US, UK/ A18

Gov't troops take over 'mansion' of top MILF leader

By Jeffrey M. Tupas and Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

PIKIT, North Cotabato—Government troops seized control yesterday of what a ranking general called the "mansion" of rebel leader Salamat Hashim, located inside the Buliok complex.

The house, believed to be worth millions of pesos, also served as the command center of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) after the fall of Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao, Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, told reporters.

Soldiers also recovered boxes of documents from Salamat's house yesterday, including manuals on assassination, ambush and bombing techniques, military officials said.

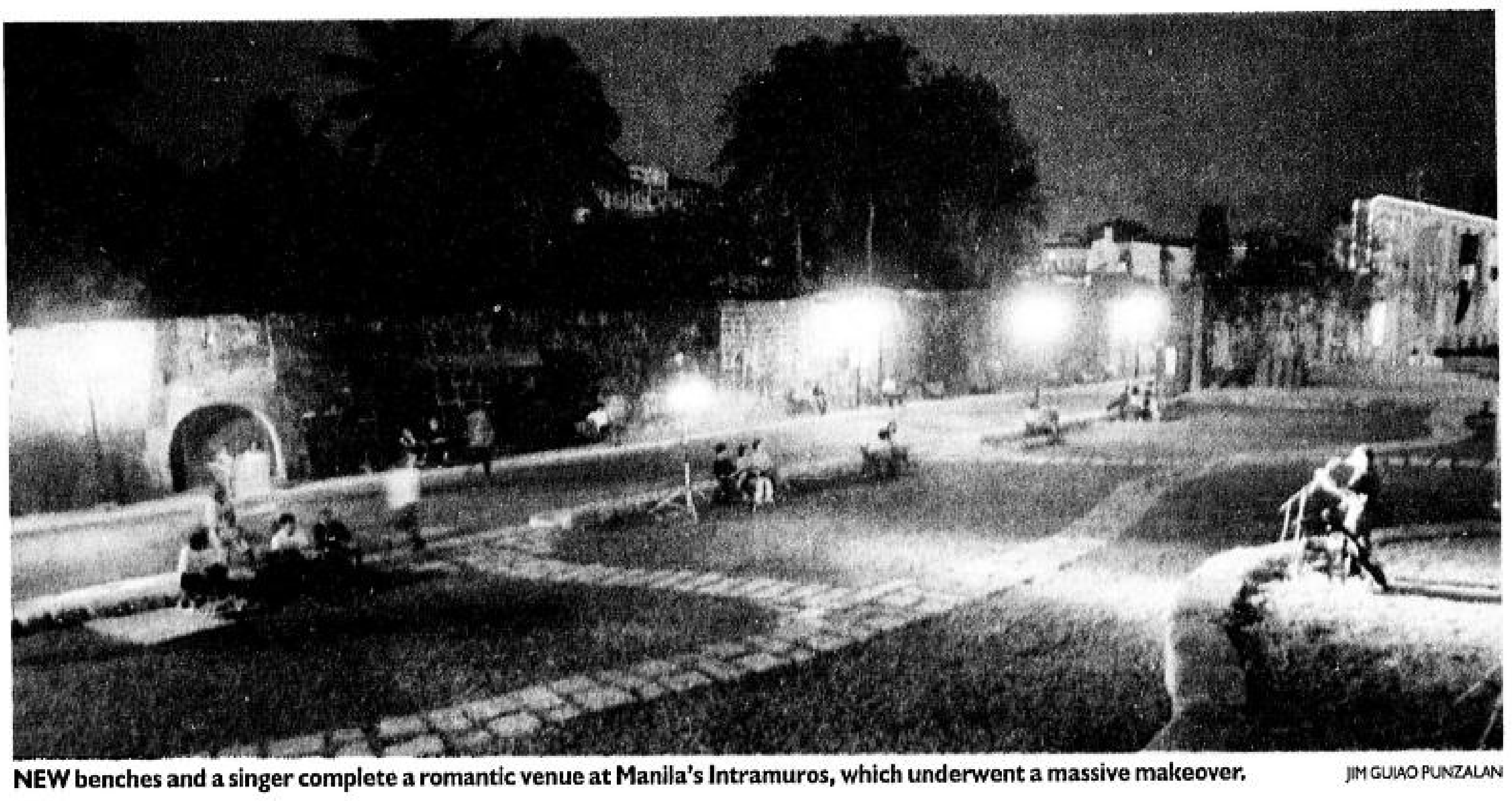
Pictures of rifle-clad children being trained as MILF guerrillas were also found. "It means they're training terrorists," Senga said. "They're training even child combatants."

With past police and military intelligence reports linking the MILF to the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama bin Laden, the military will examine the seized documents for evidence of such a connection, army spokesperson Maj. Julieto Ando said.

The abandoned building and three nearby huts apparently used as Muslim prayer areas were in a heavily fortified compound that was ringed by deep trenches and concrete fences with barbed wire. The compound was shielded from the air and on the ground by banana and coconut trees.

The Buliok complex is a vast, marshy area straddling the provinces of North Cotabato and Maguindanao, which the military said it captured late last week in a major offensive involving thou-

GOV'T/ A7



NEW benches and a singer complete a romantic venue at Manila's Intramuros, which underwent a massive makeover. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

History Town rises in new Intramuros

By Volt Contreras

YOU could say that Filipinos have claimed Intramuros for their own.

There you can dine under the stars while waiting for a "sidewalk artist" to finish your portrait. You can sample native delicacies, buy indigenous craft and book pleasure tours to the country's best resorts. While strolling, you can listen to *kundiman*, ethnic rhythms, jazz and even Mozart.

Not too long ago, this scene played only in the mind of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon. But today it's here, a revitalized Walled City of Intramuros, resurrected after years of languishing as just another dormant tourist draw in the heart of Old Manila.

As a centerpiece of the Department of Tourism's Visit Philippines 2003 campaign, Intramuros has undergone a major makeover. The drab maze of Spanish-era fortifications and adobe houses has become a bright, breezy park of cultural pursuits.

Opened free of charge to the public on Feb. 1, the former enclave of the Spanish conquerors is now marketed as "History Town Philippines," a place where Filipinos can proudly take their lo-

HISTORY/ A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and mostly over Visayas and Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: ARMIN ADINA, PDI RESEARCH/02/17/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Gov't 'deeply divided' over Iraq

By Carlito Pablo

LIKE many of the United States' major partners, the Macapagal administration is deeply divided on how to deal with the Iraq issue, particularly on how far to go in supporting the US, its chief military ally.

According to two administration sources, members of the civil society bloc–the so-called doves–have called for a "moderation" of the government's largely pro-US stance during Cabinet debates on the issue.

The doves are ranged against the "hawks" who include Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

"There are those who are saying that we're going too far in toeing the US line," one source said. "There are others who say we're doing just right."

A second source said some officials were questioning "what good it would bring" the country to adopt an all-out pro-US position.

"What are we getting in return? Can the US, for one, protect our workers in the Middle East once war breaks out?" the doves were said to have asked.

There are 1.4 million overseas Filipino workers in the troubled region.

The Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) is scheduled to meet today to assess the results of the Feb. 14 meeting of the UN Security Council in which the US largely failed to get categorical support from the major powers for military action against Iraq

The Department of Foreign Affairs is expected to present an assessment of the meeting.

In a report to the Security Council on Friday, chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix reported an improvement in Iraqi cooperation and said that no weapons of mass destruction had been found.

Unilateral strike

Many believe the Blix report may have somewhat lessened the possibility of war but others believe the chances of a unilateral strike by the US and its allies have increased.

The President earlier expressed the Philippines' disappointment with Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council Resolution 1441 calling on the country to comply with previous UN resolutions for it to disarm.

House legislators yesterday urged the government to advocate peace instead of supporting the US.

They reminded the government that 130 members have supported an anti-war resolution in the House authored by Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales and others.

Rosales said HR 822 expresses the sense of the House that government should not support any unilateral military action against Iraq without any clear mandate from the UN Security Council.

In a statement, Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra said the "congressional sentiment" on the issue should guide the meeting today of the COCIS.

"If a vote were to be held today, the sense of the House resolution against the war will be adopted unanimously," he said.

Lakas Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri urged the government to be an "advocate for peace and not be acolyte of a bully."

Zubiri urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to convey to Washington this early that it "will not condone but will condemn" any attack on Iraq that is not sanctioned by the UN.

Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez recommended that the government support the position of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, which is to give the UN weapons inspectors a little more time to do their job.

Militant groups yesterday pressed the government to withdraw the President's statement of support for the US campaign against Iraq, warning that a US invasion of Iraq would send some seven million Iraqi people to their deaths.

"Mrs. Arroyo should quit moving heaven and earth just to draw us into the US' stupid aggression against Iraq," the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said in a statement.

Anakpawis, another militant group, hailed the UN for proposing an extended period for arms inspections, and hoped this would pave the way for the UN to reach a "resolute opposition" to a US war against Iraq. *With reports from Christine Avendaño and TJ Burgonio*

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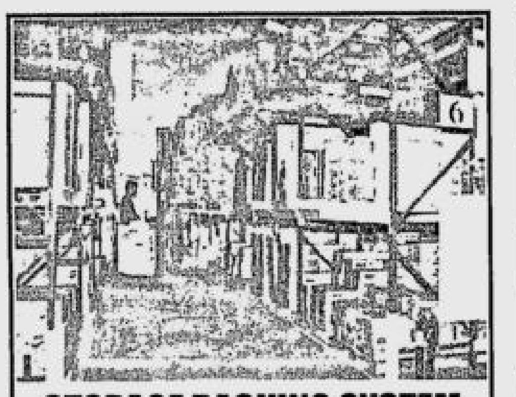

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Stop texting kin in Kuwait–Cimatu

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Filipino workers in Kuwait are asking their relatives in the Philippines to stop sending text messages imploring them to come home, said retired Gen. Roy Cimatu, Malacañang's special envoy to the Middle East.

"You are just making them nervous," Cimatu said.

He said the 60,000 Kuwait-based Filipino workers were "less tense" than their loved ones back home.

He said the relaxed atmosphere was largely because of the government's contingency plan for the evacuation of OFWs which has become the model for seven other countries with nationals working in Kuwait.

The plan includes sending text messages and car pooling.

If war breaks out in Iraq, Filipinos in Kuwait would be asked to go to the designated relocation site on the border of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

If the conflict becomes more serious, the Filipino workers in Kuwait would be asked to cross the border to Saudi Arabia, Cimatu said.

To be in constant contact with the workers, a communication scheme involving text messaging, radio communications and a radio program for Filipinos was put in place.

The Kuwaiti government has made available two hours of radio time in the government broadcast network. Radio announcers using the Filipino language update the Filipino workers on the impending war as well as the contingency plan. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

2 quakes hit Bicol in 1 day

LEGAZPI CITY–Two earthquakes that hit parts of the Bicol region hours apart on Saturday damaged roads, buildings and electric posts in Masbate, according to Sr. Supt. Romeo Mapalo, Masbate provincial police director.

Mapalo placed initial damage at between P2.5 and P5 million in Masbate City and Palanas town. He said damage was also sustained in Uson and other towns. He said there were no casualties as a result of the quakes.

The first jolt hit at 1:47 p.m. on Saturday with a magnitude of 5.2.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) in Legazpi City said the earthquake was tectonic in origin, meaning it was caused by movement of the Masbate segment of the Philippine Fault.

Intensity 4 was experienced in Legazpi City, while it was intensity 3 in places like Bulusan, Sorsogon, Leyte and Marinduque.

Later, at 7:01 p.m. another series of stronger shocks was felt. This time, the quakes registered intensity 6 in Masbate and intensity 5 in Legazpi City.

Damaged was the Market Site in Barangay Pating, Masbate City, where a Muslim Arabic school is located. Furniture, fixtures and books in the school worth some P500,000 were reported affected.

The municipal road and some houses in Barangay Sta. Cruz were destroyed.

Mapalo said some posts of the Masbate Electric Cooperative in Barangays Crossing and Sto. Cristo, Uson town were toppled and the municipal police station also suffered some damage. *Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Ople pleads but HK adamant about tax

By Norman Bordadora and Cookie Micaller
Contributor

HONG KONG—Foreign Secretary Blas Ople has asked Hong Kong to reconsider a plan to impose a new tax on thousands of Filipino domestic workers here, saying it would not be good for the relationship between Hong Kong and the Philippines.

"(The proposal) will upset an excellent relationship and erode some of the goodwill that the Filipino people have reserved for Hong Kong and its people," Ople told members of the Hong Kong business community after an hour-long meeting on Friday with Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive.

Hong Kong plans to impose a HK$500 monthly levy on the minimum wages of about 237,000 foreign workers under a new plan designed to fight a ballooning budget deficit and which is expected to be implemented in March.

In a press conference here on Saturday, Ople said Tung was "apologetic" but explained that the tax was an "economic necessity to distribute the pain of adjustment equitably among all the sectors of Hong Kong society."

But the foreign secretary said the Philippines would not take drastic action to protest the proposed tax, including banning the deployment of Filipino workers to Hong Kong.

Ople nevertheless criticized the proposed tax as "a serious act of discrimination" as Filipino workers were the most economically hard-up and at the lowest rung of Hong Kong society.

"It is my view that the so-called equitable distribution is not equitable at all because it would affect the least capable members of Hong Kong society," he said.

Filipino workers, who at 153,0000 make up the biggest number of domestic helpers here, plan to stage a major protest action on Feb. 23 against the proposed tax.

Ople said other emissaries would continue to make appropriate representations with the Hong Kong government "to demonstrate that the proposal that adversely affects the least capable and most vulnerable in Hong Kong's society is deplorable."

In his meeting with Ople, Tung cited Hong Kong's HK$70 billion budget deficit, its unprecedented unemployment rate of 7.2 percent, serious deflation during the past five years, declining income, the collapse of the property market, its strong currency which has made it less competitive and other economic challenges.

He emphasized that the Hong Kong government was not singling out Filipino workers. He said Hong Kong valued its relations with the Philippines and appreciated the presence of the Filipino workers.

Ople suggested that the planned tax could be averted or recalled once Hong Kong solved its economic troubles.

"There are economic forces at work all the time and these economic forces will reconfigure that," he said.

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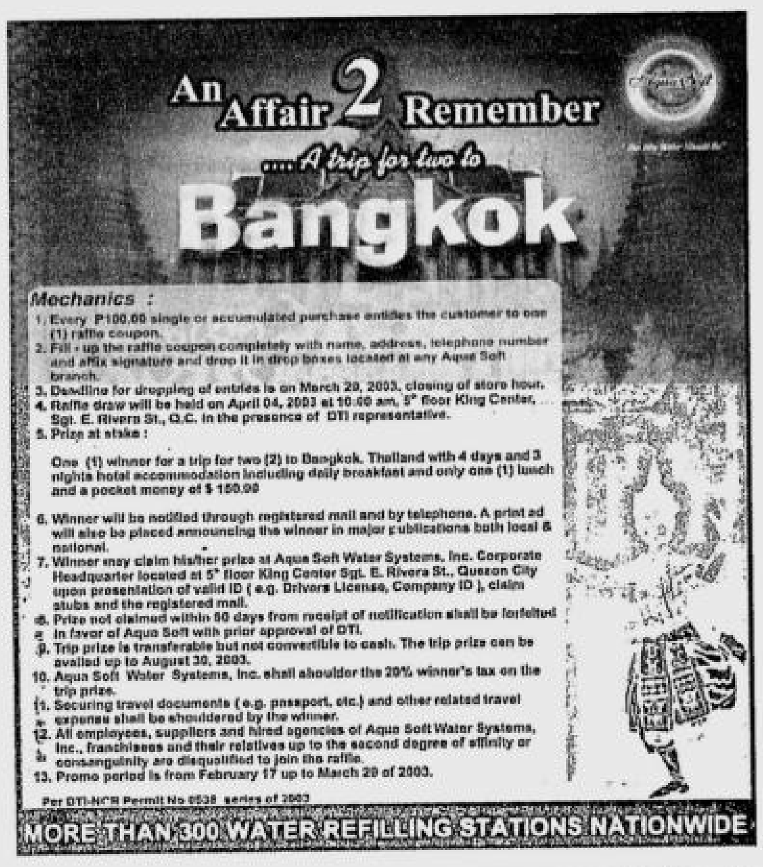
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BI lifts deport order on Brazilian mother

THE BUREAU of Immigration has lifted the deportation order on Sandra de Carvalho-Ocier, the Brazilian woman who has been fighting for custody of her three children by her Chinese-Filipino husband the past seven years.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo signed a resolution on Feb. 12 allowing Ocier to remain in the country pending the resolution of her custody case before a Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Domingo's resolution was "the best Valentine's gift for a mother," Ocier said.

Ocier left the Makati Medical Center on Feb. 14 after being confined for weeks due to stress and a surgical procedure. An immigration agent guarded her door around the clock.

On Friday, however, the agent told Ocier he was leaving and she was free to go by order of the BI central office in Intramuros.

Domingo said she issued the resolution in view of the fact that Ocier had pending motions before the BI board of commissioners and the Court of Appeals, and was engaged in a custody battle in a QC court.

Ocier, in fact, is now barred from leaving the Philippines after being placed on the BI's hold departure list.

She said she planned to stick it out in her fight with her husband Henry Ocier, of the family behind Belle Resources and the Tagaytay Highlands.

Sandra had accused Henry of arbitrarily taking the children away from her and moving out in 1995, while Henry said Sandra was an unfit mother. *Blanche S. Rivera*

PMA grads use alumni rites to call for justice

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—The classmates of three graduates of the Philippine Military Academy who died in mysterious circumstances appealed to the Department of Justice to fast-track or reopen the investigations into their deaths, during the annual PMA alumni homecoming here Sunday.

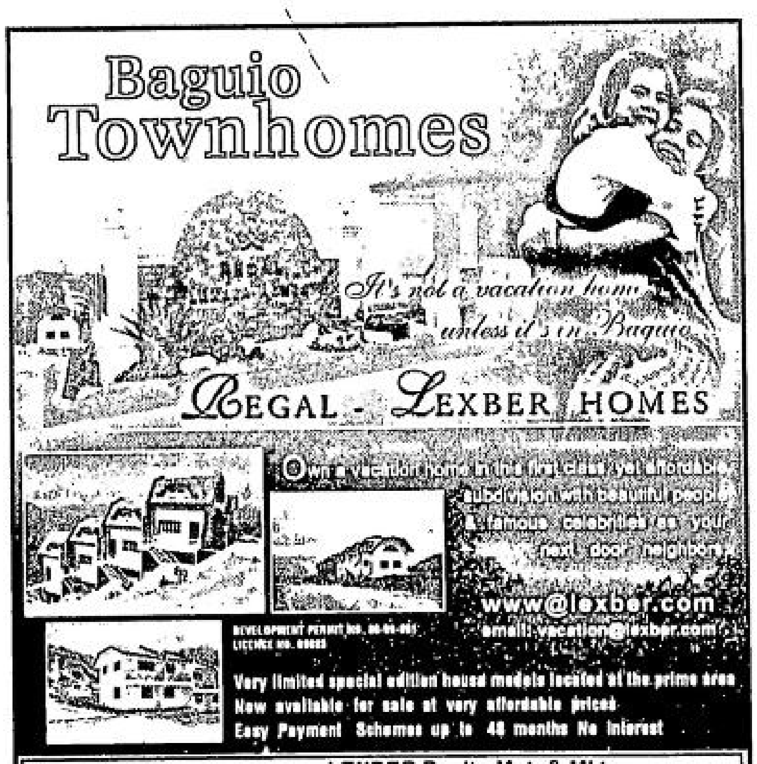
The "mistahs" of Supt. John Campos, 2nd Lt. Jessica Chavez and Navy Ensign Phillip Pestaño also formed a united front that may help look for witnesses to their comrades' killings that government investigators may have either ignored or missed.

"We are sending a formal appeal to the DOJ to take a closer look into Jessica's death, and we realize other classes have encountered the same blank wall with regard to the deaths of their own classmates," said Lt. Ronaldo Sarmiento, outgoing president of Sanghaya Class 2000 to which Chavez had belonged.

Campos' mistahs also used the homecoming to appeal for justice for him.

The 38 members of Hinirang Class '87 wore vests emblazoned with "Justice for Campos" and black armbands during the alumni parade.

Pestaño, a member of Maalab Class '93, was found dead in his cabin on a Navy boat but a military tribunal ruled that his death was a suicide. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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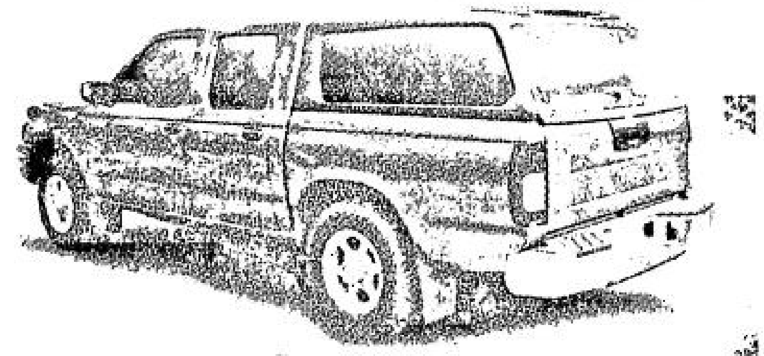

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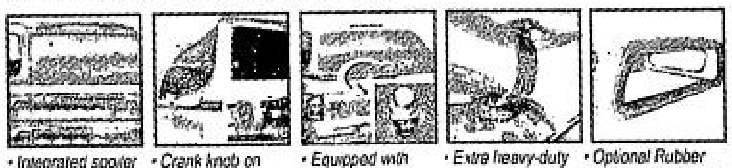

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Let us run Terminal 3 while cases pend in SC, Piatco asks gov't

THE PHILIPPINE International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco) has asked the government to allow it to operate the new international airport terminal it had built, while awaiting the final results of litigation involving the project.

Piatco vice president Moises Tolentino Jr. made the request in the wake of an earlier proposal by Trade Secretary Mar Roxas that the government operate the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 pending resolution of the cases before the Supreme Court.

Several cases had been filed with the Supreme Court questioning the validity of the government's contract with Piatco to build and operate Terminal 3 before turning it over to the government after 25 years.

Takeover

While the cases were pending in the Supreme Court, however, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared the contract, including its amendments and supplements, null and void.

"We can make the terminal operational within 60 days, as soon as the government notifies us and all the airlines and government agencies concerned," Tolentino said.

He warned against a temporary government takeover of the terminal, saying the government did not have any legal basis for a takeover.

He said it also didn't have the personnel with the technical training needed to run the new international passenger terminal.

"Besides, the technology we introduced is far different and superior to the technologies of Terminals 1 and 2," Tolentino said.

Piatco, he said, has hired and trained hundreds of technical people with the skills necessary to operate and maintain the terminal under the supervision of the consortium's technical consultants.

'Eye-to-eye'

Tolentino also dismissed rumors Piatco's German partner Fraport A.G. did not see "eye-to-eye" with its Filipino counterpart.

"Once the terminal becomes operational, Fraport will definitely be a significant part of the team as it remains an important shareholder in Piatco," he said.

"Only last week, Fraport reaffirmed its continuing commitment to send the personnel and technical experts to help operate Naia 3," he added.

But, Tolentino said, Fraport, a German corporation owned 60 percent by the federal state government of Hesse, is preparing to file a suit for arbitration against the Philippine government under the RP-Germany investment treaty.

He said the German investors want to take the case to the World Bank "because that is the mode of settlement specified under the 1965 Convention on Disputes Settlement which was ratified by both the Philippines and Germany."

He said the matter was between Fraport as a foreign investor and the government and Piatco was not involved. *Norman Bordadora*

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Gov't troops take over MILF 'mansion'

From page A1

sands of soldiers and Marines.

AFP spokesperson Col. Essel Soriano said 157 rebels, five soldiers and one government militiaman were killed in the fighting. But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu claimed only 40 guerrillas were killed, including 35 Thursday in a clash in Sultan Kudarat province, in the single biggest guerrilla loss in recent memory. Military deaths and injuries are now "by the hundreds," Kabalu claimed.

Neither count could be independently confirmed.

MILF denial

The MILF, which has been waging a bloody separatist war in parts of Mindanao, denied the military's claims, saying the offensive was aimed at pressuring them into accepting a peace deal.

Kabalu denied that Salamat maintained a house or command post in Buliok and added the military may have found a Muslim prayer center. The rebel documents were "planted" by military officials to justify the military assaults, which were actually a violation of a cease-fire agreement, he said.

"This is a psychological, propaganda operation by the military," Kabalu told The Associated Press by telephone. "If we abandon an area, do you think we would leave any delicate documents there?"

He acknowledged many MILF guerrillas abandoned their strongholds in Buliok because of the overwhelming number of military forces.

"We're natives there and we have a mastery of the terrain," he said. "We've just maneuvered out to avoid the tanks and planes, but we're just around running and watching."

President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose administration is working to resume Malaysian-brokered peace talks with the rebels, last week ordered the offensive on Buliok, stressing it was not directed against the MILF but against criminals and outlaws who have allegedly taken refuge in MILF areas—including those from the Pentagon gang, a notorious kidnap group on the US State Department's list of terrorists.

Luxurious mansion!

Senga said Salamat's "mansion" was complete with communication equipment and other facilities that showed how "Salamat was living in style."

The equipment was carted away by the MILF rebels when they left the area two days after the war was launched, Senga said.

"While his constituents are living in abject poverty, he [Salamat] is living in style," said Col. Carduzo Luna, commander of the 602nd Infantry Battalion.

"Imagine the hard labor of the people in building this mansion ... imagine the *'sakkat'* (tax) sucked from the people," Senga said.

Senga said Salamat stayed in the mansion after his house in Camp Abubakar was destroyed by government forces during the all-out-war ordered by President Joseph Estrada in 2000.

There are many similarities between the Abubakar house and the Buliok mansion, including the presence of many doors, Senga said.

But unlike the Abubakar house, the mansion in Buliok was untouched. Senga said the military does not know yet what to do with the mansion, except to secure it.

The documents, including a bomb-making manual, could prove allegations that the rebel group and their allies were indeed involved in activities like bombing, Senga said.

The bombs being made in the area were similar to the bomb used in Kidapawan City last year that killed eight people and injured many others, he said.

Earlier, Luna described Buliok as the "factory of war" of the MILF and their allies. *With reports from TJ Burgonio, AP and AFP*

Ping ...

From page A1

Majority Leader Loren Legarda a rather personal question.

It took him more than two months to summon up the nerve, but finally, about two weeks ago, he finally mustered the courage to ask her: Did she have a live mole, and in which part of her body?

Lacson said a *feng shui* expert had told him he would become president only if his running mate was a woman who was "articulate and a good speaker, with shoulder-length hair and tantalizing eyes, pretty face and most of all, a live mole in the body."

Lacson said he thought the description fit Legarda, except in one aspect: the mole.

During the conference committee meeting on the absentee voting bill two weeks ago, he finally found himself asking Legarda.

The exchange went this way:

Lacson, in Filipino: "Loren, I've long wanted to ask you this. I hesitated because you might slap me. Do you have a mole? Which part of your body?"

"What?" Legarda replied. She admitted later that she was embarrassed by the question; she paused for a while, and then answered, "None."

Lacson said he was about to lose hope when Legarda spoke again, in Filipino. "Actually, yes. Two live moles. One on my chest, another on the side of my tummy. But I had them removed recently by my dermatologist because they might be cancerous."

It was then, Legarda said, that Lacson's face lit up.

Lacson said he was not a great fan of fortune telling, but admitted that he was "amazed" at the striking similarities between Legarda and his supposed lucky lady in 2004 as seen by the "grandmaster" whom he visited at a temple in Shanghai, China two months ago.

Lacson's "encounter" with the "supernatural" took place when he joined an official mission to China sponsored by the Brighsan Biotech Co. Also on that trip was former Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio Morales.

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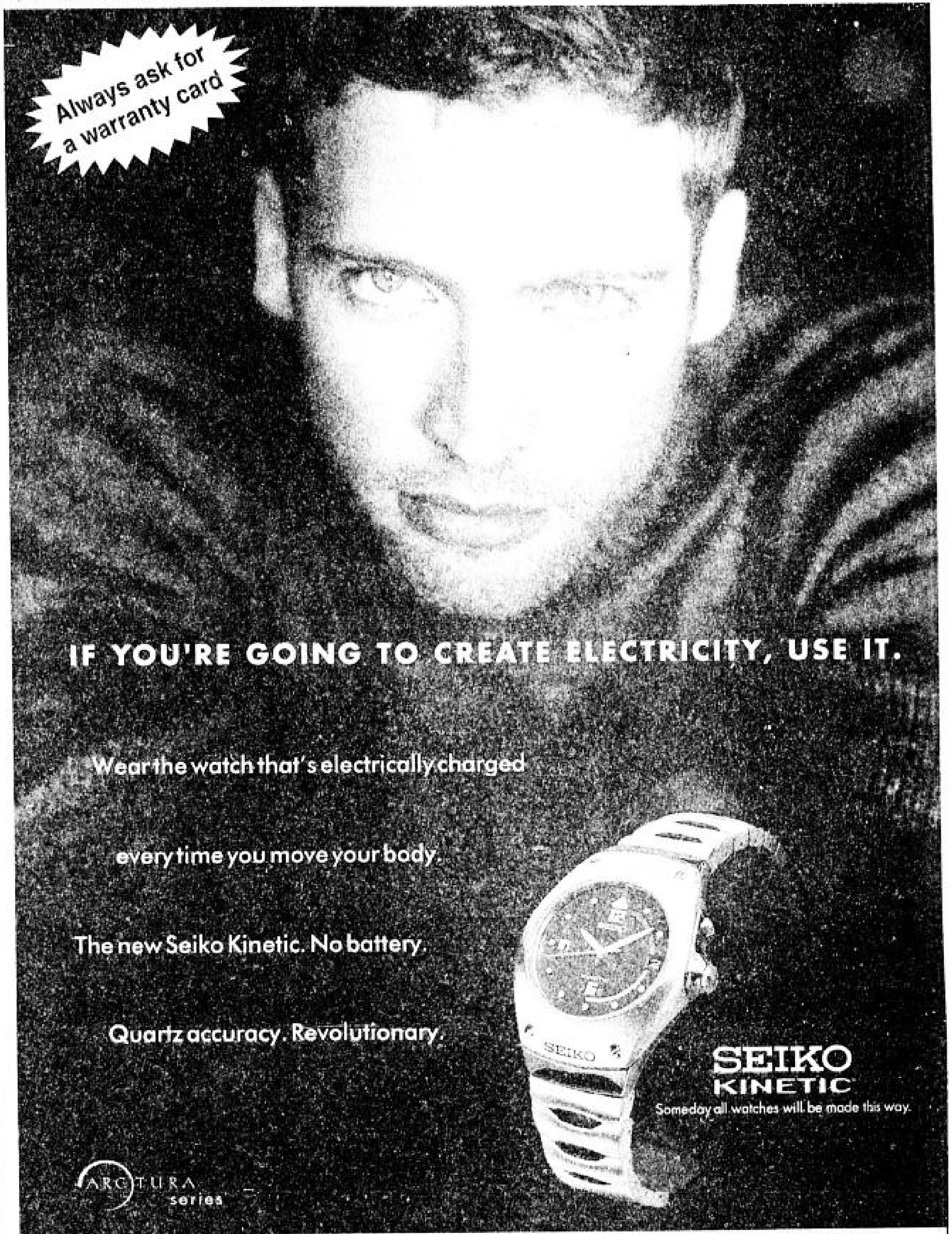

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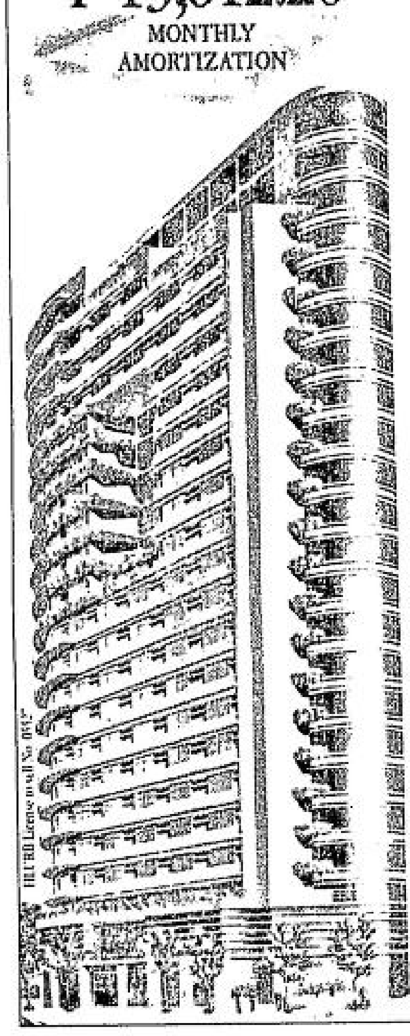

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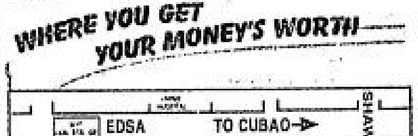

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Shame

EDITORIAL

ALMOST 200 people were killed and more than 50,000 were forced to evacuate in the military campaign to capture Buliok complex in Central Mindanao last week. But you wouldn't have known it, if you were a member of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

Last week, the news among the party faithful was the progress 50 of their congressmen had made in their efforts to draft San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. into the party as candidate for president.

The congressmen signed a petition asking Cojuangco—founder, chair emeritus and 1992 presidential candidate of the Nationalist People's Coalition, the second largest party in Congress—to run as the Lakas standard-bearer in next year's polls. Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras presented the petition to Cojuangco in his San Miguel office in Mandaluyong City last Friday, Valentine's Day. The date was most appropriate, because the petition was nothing less than a love offering to the original Marcos crony.

Cojuangco's response, Paras eagerly reported, was tantalizing enough: "I'm not interested and I don't need it. I'm happy where I am but I am also a Filipino. If duty calls, who am I to refuse?"

Paras interpreted the remarks of the ex-governor of Tarlac and ex-ambassador-at-large of the Marcos era with unguarded optimism: "My analysis is he will go for it. It will really be a sacrifice on (his) part but my feeling is, he will go for it."

This is the same Cojuangco who almost cost Lakas founder Fidel Ramos the presidency in 1992, the same Cojuangco who supported Joseph Estrada in 1998 until his ouster in 2001 brought Lakas back to Malacañang.

The petition came from the same party whose co-chair, President Macapagal-Arroyo, has already called for a moratorium on "endless politics," a desperate appeal to let government finally do its job.

Apparently, none of this makes any difference for Paras or the 49 other Lakas congressmen. Clearly, to them applies that maxim of gross political expediency that John F. Kennedy quotes in "Profiles in Courage": that "there are times when a man in public life is compelled to rise above his principles."

If Lakas, the NPC's coalition partner, decides to choose a controversial businessman whose name does not yet register on the radar of political surveys, that is its own lookout.

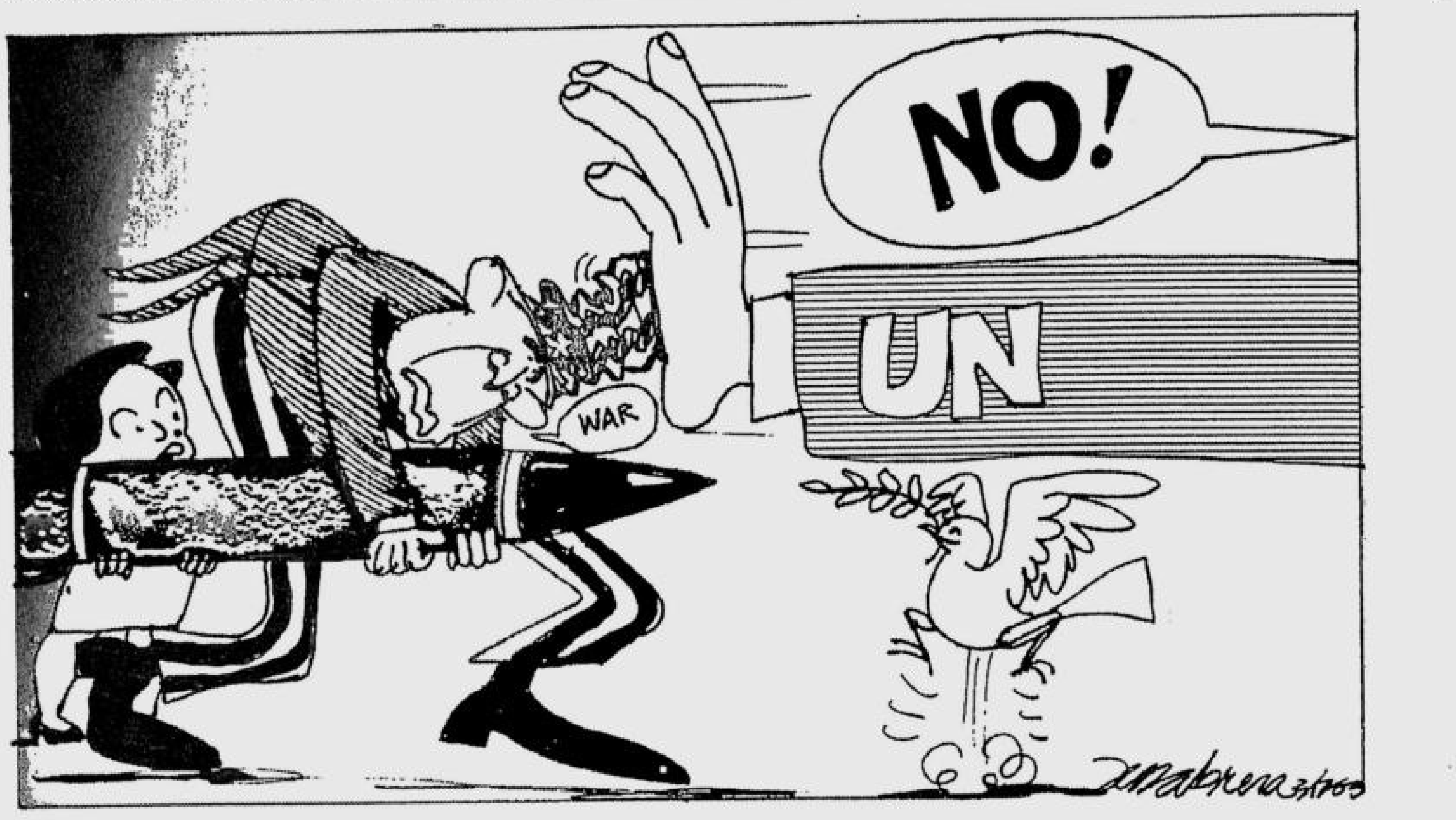
What we find shameful, however, is the timing of the announcement. At a time when the nation is still reeling from the sudden shock of discovering that an undeclared war has been launched in Central Mindanao, the news about a lawmaker paying court to a political kingmaker leaves an awful taste in the mouth.

At a time when the nation is looking forward to a politics-free year, to get the economy back on track and rid what Lakas co-chair Speaker Jose de Venecia called the "poison" in the air, the news about yet another political maneuver confirms the public's worst suspicions about politicians' ambitions.

The draft-Cojuangco campaign comes in the wake of Sen. Panfilo Lacson's advertising campaign to cast himself as a hero in the legislative battles to reshape the anti-money laundering law; apparently, all it takes to overcome his virtual silence in the chambers of Congress is a paid newspaper advertisement. The get-Cojuangco-to-run offensive comes after Lakas Sen. Juan Flavier all but threw his hat into the May 2004 ring, and after Lakas Sen. Loren Legarda continues to broadcast her message that she is herself open to a draft; apparently, for them, popularity remains a substitute for party or platform. The Cojuangco draft succeeds the pathetic attempts by Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino to reform itself and convince Fernando Poe Jr. to run for Malacañang; apparently, all it needs to rehabilitate its reputation is appoint a new party head and draft another movie actor.

It is a pity that prospective candidates and their moist-eyed supporters have an enormous loophole in the country's election laws they can squeeze their proportionately sized egos through. Strictly speaking, they are not guilty of electioneering. But in reality, they are doing the country a great disservice. By spreading De Venecia's poison, they are suffocating the public and smothering the hopes for reform.

There ought to be a law.



Garcia reversed intent of GSIS charter

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(This is a continuation of last Friday's [Feb. 14] column on abuses in the Government Service Insurance System.)

THAT column dwelt on how the chief of the GSIS, Winston Garcia, violated the GSIS charter by removing the limit on the Average Monthly Compensation (AMC) upon which the monthly pension of retirees is based. The purpose of that limit is the equitable distribution of the pension fund.

The limit used to be P16,000. So even if you are receiving a salary many times higher than that, your monthly pension is computed at 90 percent of P16,000 or P14,000.

When Garcia removed the limit set by law, effective January 2003, it opened a bonanza for high-salaried executives of the government. For example, an employee who has a monthly compensation of P10,000 will get a monthly pension of only P9,000. But an executive with a monthly compensation of P300,000 will have as pension a whopping P263,112.50 a month.

Garcia's illegal removal of the limit set by law has obvious selfish reasons. It is to feather his nest when he retires, since his monthly compensation is P300,000 or thereabouts. Any sensible official of a government financial institution (GFI) knows this is wrong, but there is not a peep out of any of them because they will be similarly benefited.

The ceiling on the AMC has been put there to ensure that the pension fund is fairly distributed among the current pensioners. No retiree or group of retirees should receive amounts which are unjustifiably more than the average amount received by the vast majority of retirees.

The reason is simple. Retirees are paid an amount equivalent to 60 months, or five years, pension immediately upon retirement. This five-year pension, which is paid in lump sum, is calculated to at least approximate the total contributions of a retiree to the GSIS during his working years. Therefore, when a retiree receives his five-year lump sum, he would have effectively recovered his contributions, or at least a substantial part of it, to the Pension Fund when he was still employed.

Therefore, when he starts to receive his monthly pension after the five-year period covered by his lump-sum payment, he no longer has any equity left in the pension fund from which to source his pension. His pension is therefore now sourced from the contributions of current contributors.

Having no equity, no one pensioner or group of pensioners has the legal or moral right to be paid amounts which are unconscionably higher than the rest of the pensioners. No one should have the privilege of enriching himself from social security. The Pension Fund should be equitably distributed to all pensioners in accordance with the prevailing consumer price index. This is the essence of social security.

The pension is a function of the Consumer Price Index and not of the salary of the retiree when he was still employed. For example, if the consumer price index is P16,000, then the GSIS may set the ceiling on the pension at an amount equal to or approximating the index. If the index rises to P18,000, then the GSIS may be justified in adjusting the ceiling in response to the rise in the index. The pension addresses primarily the basic needs of the retirees considering prevailing prices in basic commodities and services.

It is irrational and contradictory to all social security principles, however, for the GSIS to allow the payment of P263,000 monthly to one retiree when the consumer price index is, for instance, only P16,000. It is opposed to all pension rules and principles that after servicing his basic needs out of his pension, one retiree can still amortize a car and a vacation house, buy designer clothes and even lose some of it in the casino, while the rest of the retirees can barely provide for their basic requirements out of their own pensions.

It is unacceptable that the GSIS contributions of the street sweepers, janitors, traffic personnel and local government clerks who receive monthly salaries of P8,000 should finance the lavish pension of one retiree who gets entitled to P263,000 pension each month because of the removal of the ceiling on the AMC and because of an already unconscionable salary rate he received when he was still employed by the government.

It is repulsive that one should live lavishly for the rest of his life out of the hard-earned contributions of the poor government employees who cannot even make both ends meet for him and his family. It is estimated that more than 500 of these poor employees contribute 9 percent of the salaries for the monthly pension of every one of these lucky retirees.

To justify the removal of the AMC ceiling, Garcia altered the contribution table provided by RA 8291.

The contribution schedule under the GSIS charter is 9 percent for the employee and 12 percent for the employer, for the monthly compensation not above the AMC limit. For those above the AMC limit, the employee pays another 2 percent in contribution and the employer another 12 percent for the amount in excess of the limit.

That schedule is a mandate of the law that cannot be revised, altered or removed without the express approval of Congress. The 2 percent additional contribution of those who receive salaries above the maximum AMC limit does not have any corresponding benefit because benefit stops at the AMC ceiling for all contributions.

The additional 2 percent contribution is the law's way of upholding the time-honored principle that those who can afford more should contribute more. It assures that the haves will give more than the have-nots while benefits shall be equitable and fair for all. This is the essence of the word "social."

But Garcia unilaterally altered the schedule by removing the AMC limit. The effect is a complete reversal of what the law intends.

Crossroads

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER again an interview I had with a 13-year-old Ituman boy more than 10 years ago. The boy was the only survivor of the massacre of a village by the NPA. Armed only with bolos and talismans, the *anting-anting* in this case being handkerchiefs dipped in "holy oil," which the Itumans waved in the air against the advancing enemy, the boy's family and clan fell in the attack. The boy himself managed to survive by lying motionless among the dead.

It was three months after the event when I saw him. He was composed, he spoke almost laconically as he told his tale. He seemed to have gotten to grips with what had happened. It was not so much an air of resignation as of expectation. Death was a way of life, it hovered above the heads of people and was never out of the range of possibility. In the course of his story, I was struck by how he was able to make out the kinds of weapons that were used at them. I asked him if he saw the enemy coming in and noted their firearms. He said no, he was cowering inside their hut along with the women and children. But he **heard** them.

He heard the shots and was able to distinguish one from the other. He said this as though he could not understand why anybody, least of all people older than he, could not know such simple things.

Every time I hear the phrase the "horrors of war," that boy's face comes to mind. The truly frightening effect of war, I think, is not that it traumatizes kids, enough to make them fearful or catatonic the rest of their lives but that it inures them to it. It makes war as natural as breathing, and learning to use its instruments as essential as learning the ABC. Not quite incidentally, I asked the Ituman kid what he wanted to do with his life, imagining, since he was being cared for by missionaries, he would say he would take up schooling seriously and try to put as much distance as he could between him and where he came from. He said without hesitation he wanted to become a Cafgu. That way he could protect himself.

In light of this, on the surface Dinky Soliman's efforts to get the public to contribute toys, modeling clay, crayons and various reading materials to the kids, 6 years old and below, that are now huddled in the refugee camps in Pikit seems reasonable. More than enabling the kids to "ventilate their trauma," as Soliman puts it, the toys and reading materials could help wean them away at an early age from the culture of war. Or at least give them a glimpse of another world. Though even here, none of that is going to help if it's just a temporary respite and the kids go back to the life they know, or will soon know, afterward. The problem is not just helping the kids overcome their trauma, it is helping them choose a life other than one tolerant of, or even devoted to, bloodshed.

Having said this, however, I don't know that Soliman's suggestion isn't a case of acute selective perception. The kind where you object to a fellow smoking a cigar in church when the real problem is that he is sitting on the pew utterly naked. For here, clearly, the problem is not how to deal with the effects of war, the problem is how to stop the war. That is so especially with the conflagration in Pikit, which has sent whole families trekking to crowded refugee centers from sheer terror, a spectacle not unlike the one we witnessed with during Cory's time, when cultists, vigilantes and hooded men roamed this earth. And which the NGOs, which counted Soliman among its leaders, bitterly protested as decimating the civilian population more than the combatants.

The conflagration in Pikit is largely gratuitous and has "wag the dog"—namely, a scripted scene calculated to override resistance to an unpopular government tack—written all over it. Certainly, you must wonder why war should flare up in that part of the country while Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Security Council have just committed this country to the war in Iraq. Indeed, you must wonder how a military group chasing the Pentagon gang could end up fighting the MILF, or still indeed how the same group, which was presumably attacked without provocation, would suddenly find a full complement of artillery at their disposal with which to counterattack.

That war is as cynical as George Bush's own, and is preventable. If the Red Cross should suggest that we donate toys to the Iraqi kids whose parents will be sent to Allah's bosom by Bush's bombs so that they might get their trauma out of their systems, it would not sound humanitarian, it would sound obscene. Any effort to suggest that war is perfectly all right, or *nandyan na 'yan*, let's just do what we can to curb its negative effects, it is not laudable, it is reprehensible.

That cannot be justified by saying one is merely the head of a government agency concerned with a limited aspect of life, such as social welfare. That is a bureaucratic attitude, the one thing Kompil and all the other anti-Erap groups bristled against an eternity ago, or so it now seems. You do not stop being a human being or having a conscience by being the head of a government office. And in any case, social welfare, as the phrase suggests, is not philanthropy, or palliatives, as Soliman knows very well. It is serving the people. Unless she, and ex-civil society leaders who are now with the government, are saying GMA's current war in the south and soon-to-be-war in Iraq serves the people, there is only one thing for them to do. Which is to speak out against that war. Or better still, resign.

You've reached the crossroads, people. You can't draw the line between life and death, serve GMA or serve the people, social welfare or personal benefit, more sharply than here and now.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Danding as king, not kingmaker

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

REPORTS that a sizable number of Lakas congressmen are backing up Eduardo Cojuangco for president in the 2004 elections have expectedly produced plenty of ripples in the political scene, one reason being that his Nationalist People's Coalition has some 60 members in the House. Throwing in his name has raised many speculations and queries. Until recently Cojuangco, who ran for president in the 1992 elections that saw Fidel Ramos a winner, has repeatedly denied any ambition, and analysts say he just wants to remain a kingmaker. But the clamor from some Lakas members apparently has titillated Cojuangco and he now asks, "Who am I to turn down a clamor from the people?" But perhaps even more titillated are the members of the House and local politicians, who see a Cojuangco campaign as the fountainhead of enormous campaign funds. As one Lakas stalwart put it, he is "the only money bag in town."

* * *

Cojuangco's supporters argue that given the business acumen he has displayed at the helm of the flagship San Miguel Corp. and the enormous success of his business ventures in Australia, he could turn the Philippine economy around and make it globally competitive. His packagers are now selling him as RP's answer to Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who entered politics in 1998 soon after the Thai financial crisis, straight from the boardroom of the Shinawatra Computer & Communications Group, one of Thailand's giant firms. Cojuangco's projection as a hugely successful corporate manager definitely has its appeal in the light of the current problematic economic situation here. One can see this in the thrust of Sen. Edgardo Angara's recent statement justifying support for President Macapagal-Arroyo because he wants to help "a sinking ship." As people get more desperate with the situation, Cojuangco's appeal will rise. Talk of an FPJ candidacy is also driving them into his arms.

In the coming months it will be interesting to see the political repackaging of Cojuangco as the savior of the economy, considering how, after the Edsa Revolution, he was looked upon as a pariah who plundered the coconut levy funds.

* * *

If Cojuangco decides to seek being king instead of kingmaker, he will draw strength from the spread of his businesses around the country and the many political favors he has sown all these years. In Negros Occidental alone where he settled years ago, he controls just about all the House members except perhaps one or two. He also runs the NPC with tight control, much like a Mafia boss (everyone in the NPC reverently calls him "Boss Danding"). This was seen in the recent voting on the impeachment of Comelec Commissioner Luz Tancangco, when his key lieutenants manipulated the early voting that got her off the hook and the party cracked the whip on its members. He will have the support of the Iglesia ni Cristo, ex-President Estrada and perhaps part of the Marcos crowd, not to mention much of the media. One drawback however for the 68-year-old industrialist is his health which is said to be not too good.

* * *

It's interesting to see how the opposition to Cojuangco will shape up, for as a Lakas stalwart put it, there is an anti-Danding sentiment in Lakas and the Edsa forces over the coco levy issue. Cojuangco probably won't win support from ex-Presidents Ramos and Aquino (the two cousins have yet to reconcile, although her brother Peping seems to have no problem with Danding) and the Church, and if President Macapagal-Arroyo joins them, this could be a substantial opposition. But some observers see GMA striking up an alliance with Cojuangco and so will Angara and his LDP.

It also remains to be seen how much of a political baggage the coco levy issue is. Significantly, Cojuangco recently sought the dropping of the 17-year-old PCGG case against him in the court arising from it. If Sen. Joker Arroyo makes good his earlier resolve to open the investigation of the coco levy issue, then that whole ignominious story and the perceived rapaciousness of the group that helped itself to the levy would surface once and for all. But with Cojuangco's allies in the Senate, this is remote.

* * *

If Cojuangco becomes a contender in the 2004 election, this could pit him against current front-runner Raul Roco. Interestingly, both of them could face the coco levy issue, though Roco could argue that he was just a lawyer in the ACCRA law firm that packaged all the coco deals for its star client, Cojuangco. Roco draws support from all the social classes, but his problem is that his Aksyon Demokratiko is a paper party and he has no money. Nonetheless Roco can give him a hell of a fight.

Cojuangco's candidacy could also derail the Charter change drive since the NPC is one of its major pillars, and affect the higher ambitions of Sen. Panfilo Lacson. The latter may try to wangle a vice-presidential slot, but Cojuangco's handlers understandably want to dissociate him from Lacson.

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With a Manila court upholding Mayor Lito Atienza's claim against the Winner Foundation in taking over the Arroceros Forest Park, we can only appeal to his good sense—that he desist from erecting a building for teachers there. Winner and those supporting its fight to preserve the forest park correctly argue that there are many buildings in the Arroceros area that are presently under-utilized, among them the old GSIS building and the former Ombudsman's office, which can service the teachers. But there are so few vacant patches of land in the polluted metropolis with ample forests that serve as its lungs. Atienza says that the 3,500 trees in the park, some of which are over a hundred years old, won't be destroyed in his development plan, but his planned building will eat up a third of the 2 hectares and ultimately some of the trees are bound to be affected.

Travails with the Tagalog language

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

UNTIL now, there is no such thing as a "Filipino" language. The constitutional mandate to develop a Filipino language as the medium of instruction in schools has not been accomplished yet. In that sense, I can sympathize with GMA's order to suspend the use of "Filipino" as the medium in academia. My sympathies, however, end there.

What we do have at the moment is not "Filipino" but Tagalog, a regional language that is spoken in that part of the country where the capital city is. Tagalog is the lingua franca of Manila and its environs. In that sense, it is and was practical for our national leaders, many of whom are or were native Tagalog speakers like Quezon. But because we are a multi-cultural nation, it is not the lingua franca elsewhere.

Ethnic statistics will show that the Tagalogs do not necessarily comprise a demographic majority. And even if they do, Visayan speakers number not very far behind. Numbers alone, however, are not the basis of adopting a national language. We have seen that in Sri Lanka where the Sinhalese majority officially enacted a legislation that conferred on Sinhala the status of the sole official language of that country. The result is the devastating violence that country has had to endure between its ethnic majority and the minority Tamils.

While I agree with ethnolinguists who aver that more and more Filipinos can now speak and comprehend Tagalog, still that does not consider the fact that it is not a language of national scope and it can never be because that is not the reality of Filipino linguistic culture. As such, Tagalog remains a language of intrusion in non-Tagalog areas just as Visayan is intrusive in non-Visayan areas.

Language can be misused as a tool for cultural assimilation. It is not just the language that we imbibe but the culture of the speakers as well. For instance, Filipino television is so dismally Tagalog. Even articulate personalities such as Winnie Monsod and Oscar Orbos often have to remind their debating guests to argue in Tagalog. I presume it is because of the ratings. The views of non-Tagalog speakers can in no way be heard because those who have minimal facility with Tagalog will find it hard to enunciate. The result is having guests mostly from Manila who do not necessarily reflect the views of those from the provinces.

Language can also be a tool of imperialism. In the Philippine cultural reality where the lowland-highland dynamics between ethnic groups is still very much operative, often it is the lowland language that is accorded cultural acceptance over the highland language, often simply considered as a "dialect" when in truth it is not. We find that in northern Luzon where the mountain people have to contend with Ilocano even if this is not their simple everyday language. We also find that in Panay where Kinaray-a speakers shift to Ilonggo once they reach the city. In Mindanao, highlanders and Moro communities have to contend with Visayan widely spoken in the lowlands.

It is prejudicial for those who say that not speaking in the "*wikang pambansa*" is being unnationalistic, unpatriotic. But what is national about Tagalog? Our use of Tagalog is very much reflective of our Manila-centric culture. I have had my own experiences. At one national historical conference, the speaker was a UP history professor who spoke in very academic Tagalog. At one point I could not help but interrupt to ask the meanings of words that sounded not Filipino but Greek.

I will cite what has already been referred to in this paper by UP anthropologist Dr. Michael L. Tan, who, last week mentioned the findings that a child easily learns a second language if he or she is already literate in the local language. The importance then of local language in instruction need not be underscored. Substituting Filipino with English may solve globalization needs, but not problems of comprehensive skills.

While it is true that local language has over the years found its way into the Tagalog vocabulary (such Visayan words as *kuno* and *kawatan*, among others), still that does not negate the fact that until now no legislative enactment has ever considered putting flesh into the constitutional mandate of developing a Filipino language.

Creating an "artificial language" is not new. That has been done before in the case of Esperanto, developed in 1887 by Lazarus Ludwig Zamenhof, a Polish oculist who wanted it used as a second international language (although present estimates of Esperanto speakers may deem it questionable, but that's another story). Perhaps developing a truly national language can be a pursuit the government can look into, a language where the words are derived from roots commonly found in Philippine languages.

Or are we still suffering the myopia of the Republika ng Katagalogan?

* * *

Comments to monta@sni.ph

Genuine fear of annihilation drives US to war

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

PEACE must have its chance, indeed, every single last one, until we are completely convinced, that the evil of war has become much less than the evil of the status quo.

France, Germany, Russia and China, supported by millions of anti-war demonstrators and peace activists in hundreds of towns and cities around the world, have stunned the war-bound British-American alliance with a militant pacifism, stymieing the wheels of war in the United Nations Security Council and in the streets of world public opinion. *Vive le France! Vive la différence! Vive la Liberté!* Make love, not war!

They have won a chance to prove that peaceful means can effectively deal with the peril Saddam Hussein poses to innocents and to civilization. There is still unanimity that the ultimate problem is Saddam Hussein and the weapons of mass destruction that everyone knows must be found and destroyed, else no nation can rest easy, even in Old Europe. The only debate is whether this should be done in the beam of Inspector Blix's flashlight, or at the point of President Bush's gun. At least, the need for detectives and policemen to enforce the will of the international community, has never been clearer.

But the whole point better not be merely to "curb US hegemony" and celebrate a victory for peace over the hated superpower and its British and Filipino running dogs. At the end of the day, Old Europe and the broad ranks of the reluctant must do more than revel in the perfuming bath of pacifism. They must produce a credible solution to the problem of Saddam and the real danger he poses to the whole world. If they offer nothing but further appeasement, and resolutions produce nothing but more resolutions, war will surely come.

Poetic justice would not be served if Saddam gets off the hook and the status quo in Iraq is maintained, with Britain and America as the aggressors and warmongers. Saddam is a fascist dictator that makes Marcos and Erap look like juvenile delinquents, and he has played the world for fools. He launched missiles against civilians in five countries (Kuwait, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran). He started two bloody wars, invading Iran and Kuwait, in which two million Arabs died. He produced several hundred tons of the deadly nerve gas, VX, made of sarin and mustard gas, and tested them. He made weapons of anthrax and botulinum toxin.

When his own son-in-law, Hussein Kamal then head of Iraq's Military Industry ministry, defected to the West in August 1995 and exposed nuclear weapons production ongoing at al-Atheer, he was lured back to Iraq by Saddam. Within days of arrival in Baghdad, he and his entire family were brutally murdered "by unknown assailants."

Why are the Americans and British, and secretly even the French, Germans, Russians and Chinese, sure that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction? Well, as one text puts it, they have the receipts from when they sold him the ingredients, don't they? How true. Then there is the cartoon showing Saddam in front of Blix, with his right hand out saying, "See, I have no WMDs." Then he shows his left hand, and says, "See, I have no WMDs." When asked to show both hands, he slyly grins, "Not without a gun to my head." Next UN resolution.

Many Filipinos who castigated America for supporting the fascist dictator Marcos, now oppose America for wanting to do regime-change on the fascist dictator Saddam, whom the United States also supported

But why is America about to wage a "preemptive war" on Saddam, with or without the French, Russians, Chinese, Germans and Pope John Paul II? In fact, why is she doing so only now, despite 12 years of Iraqi defiance of the United Nations since the end of the First Gulf War of 1991? Why, indeed, did they not finish him off then?

Strangely enough, one and the same answer, in my opinion, applies to all three questions. President Bush said on Saturday while addressing the troops, "We cannot wait for one of these terrible weapons to show up in one of our cities before taking action to defend America." The American political and military leadership is seized by a genuine fear of annihilation from weapons of mass destruction that they themselves, and all the other permanent members of the Security Council, helped Iraq to acquire.

They did not invade Iraq in 1991, and stopped after freeing Kuwait, because they feared, quite rightly, that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction waiting for them in the Mother of All Traps! What they found in Iraq after Saddam surrendered, scared them. Twelve years of hide-and-go-seek later, and after 16 or 17 UN resolutions, demanding disarmament, Saddam still has and is willing to use or give these weapons away. Does he, like Erap and Marcos, deserve a forcible "regime-change"?

The substantial point for international debate is whether such a preemptive war, based on a genuine fear of annihilation, is aggression or legitimate self-defense, in the asymmetric world after 9/11. You must decide in your own mind, whether the motives of America make this a just war or not. I have found it useful to subject America's declared purposes to the rigorous tests of the traditional Catholic "doctrine of the just war," a concept which is shared by many faiths, including Islam. Traditional Catholic teaching on war and peace is from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, unless their ethics of war have been supplanted by the defeatist heresies of Jaime Cardinal Sin, recently publicized in this newspaper.

I challenge all Filipinos of good conscience and sound minds to do the same, so that in the light of reason and the quest for justice, we might then give this war on Saddam Hussein our ardent support, or with moral fervor, oppose it.

* * *

Comments to deanjbocobo@yahoo.com

To apologize or just keep quiet

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

WHEN pride gets in the way, some people do not find it easy to say sorry for errors committed. I do not want to sound sexist, but I think most men are uncomfortable about openly admitting their mistakes. It probably has something to do with the machismo culture in our society.

On several occasions in the past, the INQUIRER had to come out with "errata" or apologies for slip-ups in the identification of the people in news and photos. When the newspaper earlier twice corrected itself on the same page for two mistaken identities, Allan Cruz Jones of Caloocan City did not know whether to laugh or cry upon seeing the bloopers.

He wrote: "I wonder if you have full-time proofreaders in your staff who can make sure that you get all the names right of the people in your photos. I once worked with a newspaper in San Francisco, California, and we were taught that accuracy is the most important aspect of any news report.

"The two wrong photo captions show that the INQUIRER is hopelessly lagging in this aspect. I think you sacrifice accuracy in favor of speed in publishing the news, never mind if they are inaccurate. It seems you enjoy making mistakes and apologizing for them.

"Is there anybody in your staff who is given the task of looking over the newspaper first before you give the green light to have it published?

"Though those mistakes seem minor, I am worried that they slowly erode your credibility and give me doubts about the seriousness with which you do your work. I am afraid that at the rate you are making mistakes, you may one day find yourself doing nothing but apologizing for them. What a waste of precious space!"

Honest mistakes

For starters, let me say that the editors do not enjoy making mistakes and later apologizing for them. Otherwise, the INQUIRER's human relations department would have a big problem on its hands.

You should see the faces of the editors when lapses in grammar or accuracy are pointed out by the publisher during the Tuesday editorial assessment meetings. The reaction ranges from disbelief to dismay to exasperation.

Here are some of the remarks you will hear: "How could I have missed that!" "Oh no, not again." "I thought I caught that mistake before I cleared the report." "Sorry, but I must have been so focused on another story I forgot to review that article when it was shown to me by the editorial assistant." The famous last words on these occasions are: honest mistake.

The editors have a high sense of pride for their outputs. But that does not discourage them from admitting their mistakes and making the appropriate corrections or apologies on the pages of the newspaper. If the error calls for additional explanation, the task of making it up with the complaining readers is given to me, either by way of a letter reply or through this column.

Of course, the newspaper can just keep quiet and act as if nothing is wrong with an inaccurate or erroneous news report or photo. It can argue that not all of the readers may have noticed it and that coming out with an erratum would unnecessarily invite attention to it.

This is what you may call the "ostrich approach." The editors bury their heads in the sand and hope that only a few readers saw the booboo. And that these souls will be so busy attending to their daily routine that they will forget the error or whatever discomfort they may have suffered after reading it will dissipate before the day's end.

Admitting errors

The problem with this attitude is, it may send the wrong signal to the reporters and members of the editorial staff on the proper work ethic. Who cares about excellence in news reporting when sloppy work will be acceptable anyway?

Another consequence of ignoring journalistic shortcomings is the erosion of the newspaper's credibility in the eyes of the readers. Dissatisfaction with the way the newspaper publishes the news can spread rapidly by word of mouth. In this process, the newspaper is defenseless and only the side of its critics will be heard.

When the readers think a newspaper cannot be trusted to report the news accurately and objectively, expect them to cancel their subscription and shift their patronage to other broadsheets. Without its readers, a newspaper is nothing but a piece of paper.

Under pressure of deadlines, writers, reporters and editors are bound to forget some of the "dos" and don'ts" in the INQUIRER's Manual of Editorial Policies. That's part of human nature. So long as the mistakes are not deliberate or attributable to laziness, they can be forgiven and treated as all in a day's work. The journalist who is error-free in his work has yet to be born. I don't think there ever will be one.

Acknowledging errors and apologizing for them has a two-pronged effect. It reminds the reporter or editor concerned to be more careful with his work. For the newspaper, it serves as notice to the readers that it is serious about maintaining its credibility and will correct itself whenever the situation calls for it.

In a recent survey of newspaper readers in the United States, it was learned that "errors people see can be forgiven, but confession is required and that if a newspaper fails to explain its actions, the readers will presume that there is a motive or an agenda coming into play."

Let me add my two cents' worth to this finding. After admitting the mistake, the writer concerned should make an effort not to repeat it. Otherwise, the process will lose its purpose and be reduced to a meaningless routine.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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LETTERS

Is a strict anti-abortion law the answer?

THE INQUIRER online news reported the death of 23-year-old Mary Joan Nobleza from severe hemorrhage following a botched abortion. In uncharacteristic fashion, police action was swift and unequivocal. One evening, TV news showed the abortion provider being arrested and charged with double homicide.

Had she survived her ordeal, Mary Joan may have found herself at the harsh end of the abortion law in the Philippines—like another young woman last year, who was hounded by media while recovering from a procedure, after which she and her mother were, without benefit of legal counsel, hauled to jail.

Mary Joan's case is typical. In 1997, the UP Population Institute estimated some 300,000 to 500,000 women are inducing abortion every year—or about 1,000 daily. The reasons they cited are as varied as women's life circumstances.

Because abortion is totally illegal under the Revised Penal Code (Articles 256-259), most of the abortions take place in unsafe conditions, by untrained hands. Such were the circumstances of Mary Joan's abortion. Such are the circumstances that cause 80,000 women to be hospitalized for post-abortion complications yearly, and some 500 die.

Will the zealous implementation of our severe abortion laws eradicate abortion?

A fuller understanding of women's life situations and agencies will tell us no. As was the case with Mary Joan, punitive measures will only drive them deeper into the back streets, deeper and closer to disability and death.

Justice to Mary Joan Nobleza therefore requires a serious and drastic rethinking of our attitudes, policies and laws on abortion.

—JUNICE L.D. MELGAR, M.D.,
executive director,
Likhaan Inc., 92 Times St.,
West Triangle Homes, QC

Another view of a kiss

"A MAN kissing a woman on a whim is not part of our culture."

This was what President Macapagal-Arroyo was quoted to have said in defense of her security aide who blocked an overseas Filipino worker from stealing a kiss during her recent visit to Kuwait.

The President's visit to Kuwait was announced. Being weary of war news, OFWs are expected to mob her, to get as close to her as possible and even to touch her, if only to get a firm and first-hand assurance from their President of their safety in the face of a brewing war.

In short, the unidentified OFW's act in "attempting to steal" a kiss is not whimsical, but a well-considered and honest reaction of a person grateful to his President who took time out to travel to the Middle East, to get assurance from the host country about the OFWs' safety.

Describing the unidentified OFW's act as not part of our culture is like saying that what President Macapagal did to former Justice Secretary Nani Perez was not just a "*beso-beso*" but a very tasteless, uncultured and shameful act.

—BENJIE R. GUERRERO,
Diliman, Quezon City

On the Tancangco impeachment decision

TODAY we bear witness as another event unfolds in the history of our democracy, and celebrate that while we have lost this particular battle, we have won the greater war against apathy and ignorance. The people have been reawakened, our people are now conscious of the enormous task and responsibility needed to make good governance, a reality in the Philippines, in the words of Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

We, men and women of good intent, are proud to be citizens of the Philippines, and even if the results in Congress were not favorable to our cause, we laud that our democracy has made this possible, and instead of dashing our hopes, it strengthens our conviction that Philippine democracy and the common Filipino are worthy of our vigilance, faith and sacrifice.

Almost 20 years ago, a man answered the question, "Is the Filipino worth dying for?" by laying down his life on an airport tarmac, a martyr for truth, freedom and democracy.

We are pleased that the conscience vote in Congress included those members of the justice committee who originally voted that our complaint was insufficient in substance because they have been convinced that the case was substantive enough to be referred back to their committee for a full investigation.

We would therefore like to appeal to the members of the House to allow the 93 representatives who were not able to vote on this matter to cast their vote and correspondingly explain such vote, even as Congress makes its appointment with history—to finally promulgate its decision on an impeachment complaint filed against an official of a constitutional body tasked to hold clean and honest elections in our country.

We make this appeal so that the constituents of these representatives would be able to fully appreciate the convictions of the men and women they have elected to represent them in Congress.

Amid all of these, we shall continue to strive to work to make Philippine democracy truly representative of the people, and in our own way, continue to advocate the implementation of clean, honest, orderly and peaceful elections—a true reflection of the principle of "one citizen, one vote."

We would therefore like to call on the Filipino people, in this state of reawakening, to continue to be vigilant, to consider all issues from all sides and most importantly, to continue making a difference by taking positive action for our democracy.

"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." Together, let us bring our country from shadow into the light.

—JOSE S. CONCEPCION JR., national chair and
BISHOP DINUALDO D. GUTIERREZ, D.D.,
national co-chair, National Citizens'
Movement for Free Elections,
6/F RFM Corporate Center,
Pioneer corner Sheridan Streets,
Mandaluyong City

Civilians have had enough of war

AS we hold our breath hoping that the impending war on Iraq will not push through, a major military confrontation has erupted right in our midst.

And yet people are hardly taking notice. Since last Friday, more than 20,000 civilians, with their carabaos, pots, mats and meager belongings in tow, evacuated to the poblacion of Pikit, North Cotabato. Their sudden mass exodus was prompted by the military operation in 11 villages against the fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The chance of another war erupting in that municipality of 60,000 people is not remote, unless top government and military authorities act promptly to defuse the situation. In the meantime, the people of Pikit, most of whom are Muslims, are bracing themselves for the specter of death, destruction and trauma.

Already, many evacuees, who account for one-third of the population, have contracted respiratory diseases and diarrhea due to congestion and inadequate sanitation facilities in the evacuation centers. Food supplies are running low. The schooling of the children are disrupted. Farms are left unattended. Villages have become ghost villages overnight. The nightmare of the total war in 2000 is coming back to haunt the civilians.

It is very sad to note that the military operation is taking place at the time of the celebration of Eid'ul Adha, which is an important Muslim holiday commemorating the Prophet Ibrahim's (Abraham) supreme act of sacrificing his son. (God spared the boy's life and instead gave Ibrahim a lamb to sacrifice.) The fact that the deployment of seven Army battalions and truckloads of Marines in Pikit came at a time when a ceasefire between the government and the MILF is supposedly in effect, is a cause for serious concern.

We call on the parties in conflict to stop the fighting immediately and desist from actions that would ignite another full-blown war in Pikit and Central Mindanao. We implore Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and the top military authorities to reconsider their troops' deployment in Pikit, and for the MILF to extend reciprocal measures consistent with its commitments to the ceasefire agreements. The civilians have had enough of war. The last thing they want is another round of violence that violates their right to peace and development. Let's not replicate the tragedy in Afghanistan and mirror the tension in Iraq in our own soil.

—LORENA B. DELA CRUZ,
executive director, Balay Inc.,
P.O. Box 1075, Quezon City
Central Post Office 1100

Unsettled fears about GMO

WE believe that the welfare of the Filipino people is President Macapagal-Arroyo's utmost goal and consideration. It is with this firm belief that we urge her to declare a "moratorium" on the commercial production of Bt corn which is being pushed by Monsanto, Cargill-Agroseeds, Pioneer Hi-Bred, and USDA through the Department of Agriculture. We are anxious that due to the utter lack of information and dissemination of important data and scientific studies on the results and impact of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), we might be making decisions with irreversible impacts.

This appeal is part and parcel of the concern over the broader issue of biotechnology or genetic engineering that results in the feared GMO. GMO is being used/integrated with the food we consume, without certainty of its safety on our health and life. We are anxious about what this will bring us.

A number of scientists from the country and abroad such as the United States, Canada, Norway and others, express grave concern and hesitance/reluctance to push "genetically altered crops" including corn, mainly due to the lack of scientific studies, testing and experimentation that would ascertain that these are actually safe and would not result in grave threats to life. As a matter of fact, there are experiments and incidents that would show its negative impact on our health and environment, such as some of those who consumed/partook of the Starlink Corn (a kind of Bt corn) who suffered allergies.

—WITH 86 SIGNATORIES,
Members of the Civil Society Counterpart
Council for Sustainable Development

Pilipinas or Filipinas?

I WOULD like to be clarified about the following:

1. Why do we use "Binibining Pilipinas" instead of "Binibining Filipinas"? We say "Filipino family" not "Pilipino family." I think "Filipinas" would be appropriate because it is a short form of Islas Filipinas.

2. Why do we use "k" instead of "c" when using a foreign word like "*kaso*"? The Spanish word is *caso*.

3. Why do we say "*isyung kalakalan*" instead of "issue *ng kalakalan*"?

4. Why do we use "*prayoridad*" instead of "*prioridad*" or priority? The user of "*prayoridad*" used the pronunciation of "priority" and at same time used the Spanish word "*prioridad.*"

5. Why don't we include in our alphabet the "ll" Spanish elle, like "*castillo*" instead of "*kastilyo*"; "ñ" Spanish "eñe" instead of "ny" Parañaque, Malacañang, *baño*. We don't write "Paranyake." In short, when we adopt or use a foreign word, neither English nor Spanish, would it not be better to use the original word without changing the spelling?

I hope our Department of Education can do something about this.

—FR. JOSE G. INGARAN,
Clergy Retirement House,
Guibang, Gamu, 3301 Isabela

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

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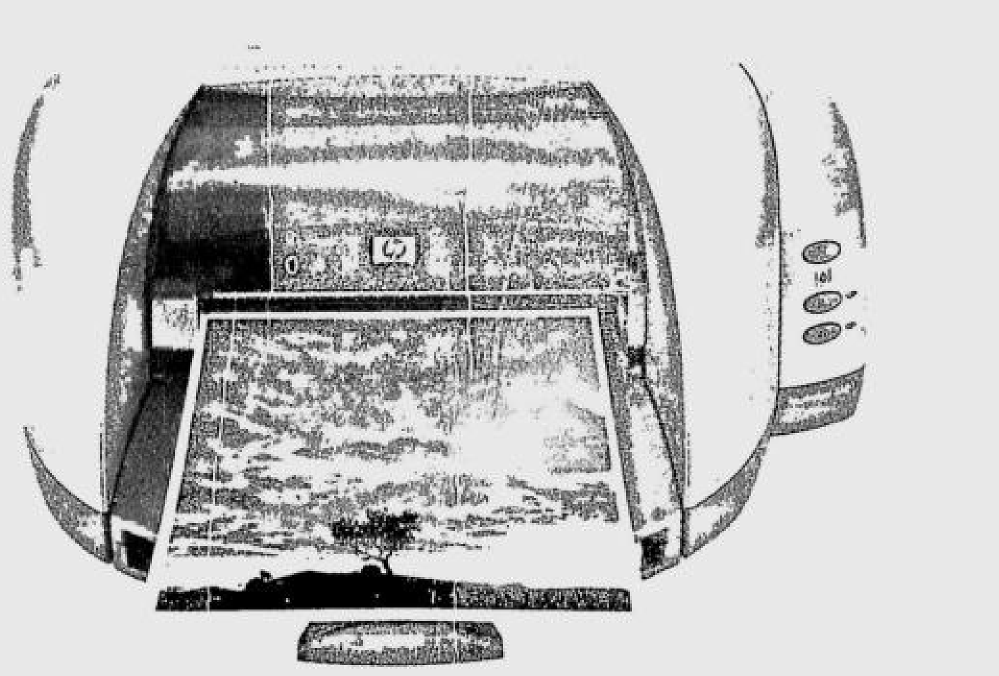

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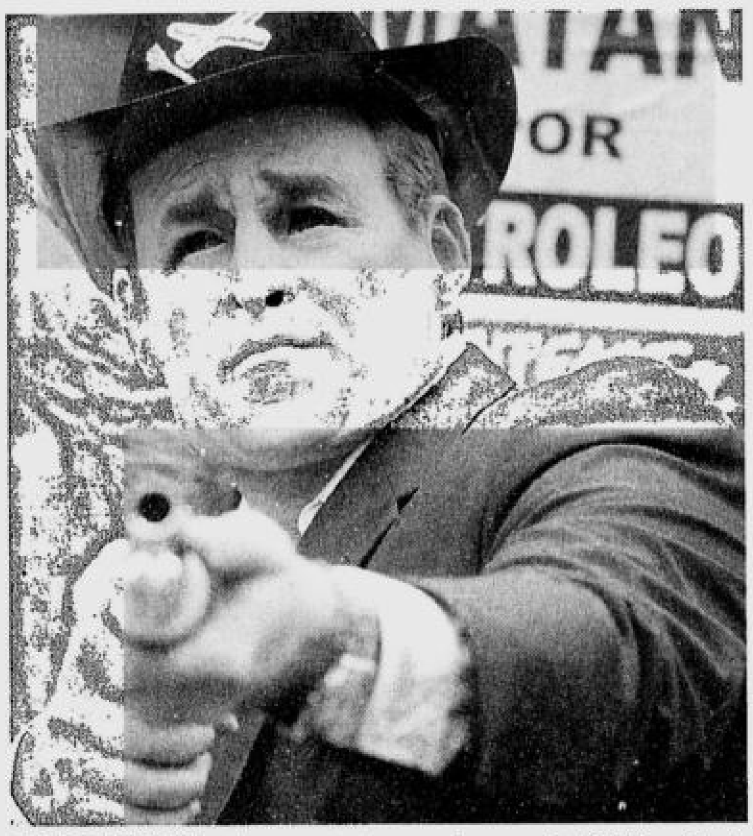
US, Britain reworking UN war resolution



AN ARGENTINE anti-war protester wearing a mask of US President George W. Bush brandishes a fake gun during a demonstration against the war in Buenos Aires on Feb. 15. REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS—Rattled by an outpouring of anti-war sentiment, the United States and Britain began reworking a draft resolution to authorize force against Saddam Hussein.

Before Friday's dramatic Security Council meeting, where weapons inspectors gave a relatively favorable accounting of Iraq's recent cooperation, US and British diplomats said they had been preparing a toughly worded resolution that would give them UN backing for military action.

British diplomats had said then that any resolution would have to include an authorization of force. They described working versions of the draft as short, simply worded texts that found Iraq in "material breach" of its obligations and reiterated that Saddam now faced "serious consequences" as a result.

In diplomatic terms, coupling the consequences with material breach would be tantamount to an authorization.

But the measured reports by inspectors, in addition to massive global opposition to war—expressed both in the council and in the streets—came as a blow to their plans.

The two English-speaking allies had hoped to push through a new resolution quickly, and there had even been talk of a Saturday council meeting to introduce it. But their plans were put on hold Friday after staunch opposition—led by France, Russia and China—drew rare applause inside the council chamber.

British and American diplomats conceded they would need to go home, consider the views of others and soften the tone of the draft.

Adding to the pressure, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in an interview Saturday with Abu Dhabi Television that another resolution, following up on Resolution No. 1441, which was passed last November, would be necessary if force were to be used against Saddam.

Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram said a resolution giving Saddam an ultimatum to relinquish power or be removed by force was still an option.

Some diplomats said privately that it was the responsibility of the five council powers—the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China—to negotiate a way out of the impasse over Iraq.

Unless that happens, US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair are unlikely to gain UN support for a war to disarm Iraq. While they may be prepared to act without it, UN backing would offer international legitimacy and a guarantee that reconstruction costs would be shared.

At Nato headquarters, Belgium tried to end a bitter dispute within the alliance, saying it would join France and Germany in endorsing a US proposal on war planning as long as it was clear that preparations to help Turkey were defensive in nature and not seen as pushing the alliance toward war against Iraq. The compromise offer was to be discussed in an urgent session Sunday.

For the past month, Germany, France and Belgium have blocked a US proposal for Nato to send early warning planes, missile defenses and anti-biochemical warfare units as a precaution to Turkey, the only Nato country bordering Iraq. The other 16 Nato allies say the delay undermines the alliances credibility while sending a signal of weakness to Saddam Hussein's regime.

A Monday meeting of the European Union will be the first opportunity to gauge readiness on the continent to negotiate. On Tuesday, the Security Council is to hold an open meeting on Iraq, designed mostly to embarrass the United States by providing a forum for non-council members to air their opposition to war.

But diplomats say that by the middle of next week, Washington and London will have a better idea about how soon they can circulate a draft. *AP*

US considers use of cyberwarfare

WASHINGTON—The United States is studying the use of cyberwarfare—attacks that could cripple or control an adversary's key computer networks—which could prove useful in a conflict with Iraq, officials and security experts say.

If pursued, it would mark the first time the United States, which has been trying to strengthen its defenses against Internet attacks and cyberwarfare, will have used these tools as a weapon.

The Washington Post reported that President George W. Bush signed a secret directive instructing the government to develop rules for how and when the government uses cyberwarfare that could, for example, disable radar and electrical facilities.

Lt. Col. Gary Keck, a Pentagon spokesperson, declined to offer specifics but said the military was looking at new technology as part of its arsenal.

"The implications of new information technologies make it incumbent on the Department of Defense to research and explore new concepts and capabilities to ensure that it can continue to effectively fulfill its mission of protecting the United States, its people and its national interests in the information age," he said.

The White House National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace, released Friday, suggests the United States may respond in kind to cyberattacks from enemies, but avoids using the term "cyberwarfare."

"When a nation, terrorist group or other adversary attacks the United States through cyberspace, the US response need not be limited to criminal prosecution," the document said. "The United States reserves the right to respond in an appropriate manner. The United States will be prepared for such contingencies."

Some advance reports about the plan said the document would specifically mention the use of cyberwarfare as a tool for the United States.

Experts say cyberwarfare could be used to disable an adversary with fewer risks of collateral damage, or civilian casualties, than dropping bombs. But they note that this type of warfare has risks, too.

"One of our goals is certainly to minimize civilian loss of life, . . . so if you can attack that critical infrastructure in a way that doesn't take it out completely, it certainly meets that goal," said French Caldwell, a cyberterrorism expert at the research firm Gartner Inc.

Caldwell said Bush's directive could eliminate legal concerns that prevented the United States from using such weapons in the Kosovo conflict in the late 1990s.

Security experts have debated whether the United States has a "secret weapon" that can disable an adversary's key computers.

While the answer is not known, experts say it may be possible to take over control of things like railway switches, circuit breakers or valves in pipes that carry water, oil and gas.

"Who knows if this stuff will really work? It hasn't been done," Caldwell said. "If we did it, it needs to be very targeted, and ideally with a means that cannot then be turned around and used against us."

Bruce Schneier, an analyst at the Internet security firm Counterpane, said it was appropriate to develop rules for use of cyberwarfare but questioned whether it had any immediate application. *AFP*

Nokor leader turns 61 amid hate calls vs US

SEOUL—North Korea marked leader Kim Jong-il's birthday on Sunday by urging the military to be on alert and the people to "burn with hatred" against the United States.

The anti-US diatribe in the state-run newspaper Rodong Sinmun appeared at the height of government-orchestrated celebrations for Kim's 61st birthday, which was hailed with festivals, speeches and calls to patriotism.

The reclusive leader's birthday is a national holiday in North Korea, and laudatory fervor has been rising for weeks ahead of the big day. On Saturday, communist party and military officials pledged loyalty to Kim.

Rodong Sinmun, monitored by the South Korean news agency Yonhap, said the United States was pushing its nuclear dispute with North Korea "to the brink of war." Washington and its allies are pressuring Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons development.

"All servicemen of the Korea People's Army should always be on the alert," the Rodong Sinmun editorial said. "All party members and workers must burn with hatred and hostility in their hearts toward US imperialists."

The isolated regime has been locked in a standoff over its nuclear activities since US officials said Pyongyang admitted running a secret weapons program last October. The United States suspended oil shipments to the impoverished country, which then pulled out of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

This year's celebrations surrounding Kim's birthday coincide with a report by Japanese media that he is grooming his 21-year-old son, Kim Jong-chul, as his successor. Kim took power in 1994 following the death of his father, Kim il-sung. *AP*

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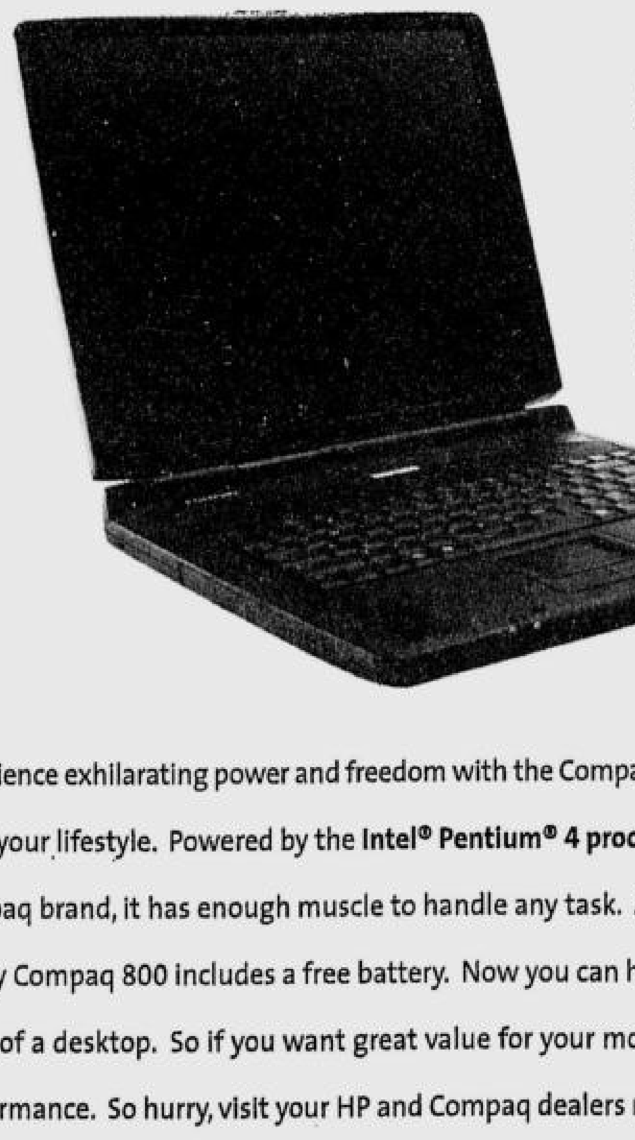

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Iraq leader draws up scorched-earth policy

WASHINGTON—Iraq's war defense plans include slowing the US advance on Baghdad and then confronting it with a street battle in the Iraqi capital, the New York Times said Sunday, quoting American intelligence.

To impede allied forces, the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has developed plans to blow up dams, destroy bridges and ignite oil fields, the Times reported, quoting US defense department officials.

Iraq may also deny food to Iraqi civilians in the south of the country to create a crisis that would saddle advancing forces with the responsibility of caring for millions of desperate people, the paper said.

"We have indications that their goal is to delay, impede and deny US forces a clear and quick victory," a defense official told the Times.

"The basic strategy can be summed up as disperse, absorb and move to military operations in urban terrain." Once forces approach Baghdad, they will encounter two defensive rings of elite Republican Guard troops, US defense officials told the Times.

The paper said many Republican Guard forces had been dispersed to help them survive allied airstrikes.

Some Republican Guard units are equipped with chemical protective gear, which has led US officials to believe Iraq will try to use poison gas or germ warfare against US and allied soldiers, according to the newspaper.

In Tokyo, nine Japanese anti-war activists on Sunday left for Baghdad to act as human shields in the event of a US-led attack against Iraq.

The nine were travelling with 20 Japanese peace activists, including a 18-year-old high school girl.

They held a banner at Japan's Narita international airport that read "Iraq-Japan: Peace and Friendship" and two young men carried placards that said: "I am going to Iraq to stop war" and "Do not attack Iraq!" *AFP*

MAKE LOVE
MAKE LOVE
NOT WAR

PROTESTERS hold a poster of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush aloft as thousands gather in Hyde Park after an anti-war protest march on Feb. 15 in London. GETTY IMAGES

WORLDBRIEFS

New Bin Laden tape

DUBAI—Terror mastermind Osama bin Laden has vowed to pursue his struggle against the United States in a new audio tape recording, Al-Hayat newspaper reported Sunday. Bin Laden also warned that Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Sudan, as well as Iran would be the next US targets after Iraq and branded US President George W. Bush as "stupid" and "the Pharaoh of the century," the daily said. *AFP*

First Sino in space

BEIJING—China plans to send its first human into space this fall and has the ability to send astronauts to the moon, reports said Sunday, citing space program officials. On Saturday, "(our) journalist got information from authoritative persons from China's space program that China will launch as planned this autumn the first manned spacecraft," the Beijing Star Daily said. Unlike China's previous space flights, which were unmanned, the manned flight will have the number of instruments used for in-space experiments reduced to make room for astronauts to conduct observation missions, the report said. *AFP*

Cave dwellers

KABUL, Afghanistan—The United Nations said Sunday authorities were trying to move out 100 impoverished families who recently moved in to the same cliffside caves that surround the famed Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban in central Afghanistan. UN mission spokesperson Manoel de Almeida e Silva said the families appeared to have moved into the caves in Bamiyan province in a bid to get new houses from aid organizations. *AP*

Sanctions on Burma

WASHINGTON—The United States said Saturday it was highly skeptical that Burma's military was serious about reform, and warned it was considering further sanctions against the junta as its patience wears thin. Lorne Craner, US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Democracy and Labor delivered a highly pessimistic survey of the political situation in Burma. He said that the US government was disappointed that the release from house arrest last year of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was not followed by a genuine effort by the government to enter dialogue with the opposition. *AFP*

1 million signatures

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian peace campaigners have garnered more than a million signatures in a politically led push against possible war in Iraq, Youth Minister Hishamuddin Tun Hussein said on Sunday. "On paper we have more than a million signatures supporting our campaign," Hishamuddin told a conference on global peace, adding a 200,000-strong rally was planned for Feb. 23. The Malaysians for Peace movement, spearheaded by the main Malay political party's youth wing but with the backing of 1,100 nongovernmental groups, has grown quickly since its launch last month in the South East Asian nation of 24 million people. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is due to assume power from Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in October, slammed Washington and its allies for fomenting war against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein having seen their sanctions policy fail. *Reuters*

Summit security

KUALA LUMPUR—Thousands of police, some armed with M-16 rifles, have been deployed in the Malaysian capital as part of a massive security plan ahead of the upcoming Non-Aligned Movement summit, top police officials said. Kuala Lumpur police chief Dell Akhbar Khan told AFP late Saturday that the deployment of some 8,500 armed security personnel, including anti-terror units, was the largest ever mobilization by the police for an international meeting. "It is normal that we consider the international environment and not just internal factors when we plan for the security," he said when asked whether police took into consideration the threat of regional terror group Jemaah Islamiah and the al-Qaida terrorist network. *AFP*

Truce violations

BANDA ACEH—Monitors overseeing a peace pact between the Indonesian government and separatist rebels in Aceh province have blamed both camps for serious violations of the accord, a document sent to AFP here Sunday showed. The accusation by the Joint Security Committee came as one Indonesian soldiers who had been missing since Feb. 10 was found dead in North Aceh district, the latest casualty in the conflict in the post-pact era. "It is clear and without any doubt in my mind that these cases constitute violations of the ceasefire," Maj. Gen. Tanongsuk Tuvinun, senior envoy for the body negotiating peace in Aceh, said in the document. *AFP*

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Napocor unions abandon SC case

BAGUIO CITY—The two unions of the National Power Corp. have abandoned a Supreme Court case, which sought to stop a Napocor reorganization plan that would hasten their termination.

"We have fought hard, but the directive terminating all of Napocor's employees (on Feb. 28) made this case moot and academic," said Jimmy Salman, North Luzon president of the Napocor Employees and Workers Union (Newu).

The Napocor board of directors, led by Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. and Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, had issued the termination deadline to comply with the provisions of the 2001 Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira).

The directive dissolves the state-owned power firm and terminates the services of some 8,000 Napocor employees nationwide.

Salman, who filed the Supreme Court suit in December along with leaders of Newu and the Napocor Employees Consolidated Union (Necu), said they decided last week to let the case "lapse," as soon as they were informed about the Napocor board's termination order.

The suit, Salman explained, was meant to "correct" the new table of organization, which divided Napocor and its work force into a transitional National Transmission Company (Transco) and six Generation Companies (Gencos).

Late last year, the Napocor board decided to farm out employees to Transco, and four new Napocor branches called the Hydroelectric Generation Division, the Geothermal Generation Division, the Thermal Generation Division, and the Mindanao Generation Division. It dissolved the Gencos in the process.

Transco had since been spun off into a separate government company.

Arturo Ortiz, Transco president, told the union members here on Thursday that they could absorb 500 on top of the 3,172 already employed by Napocor's transmission firm.

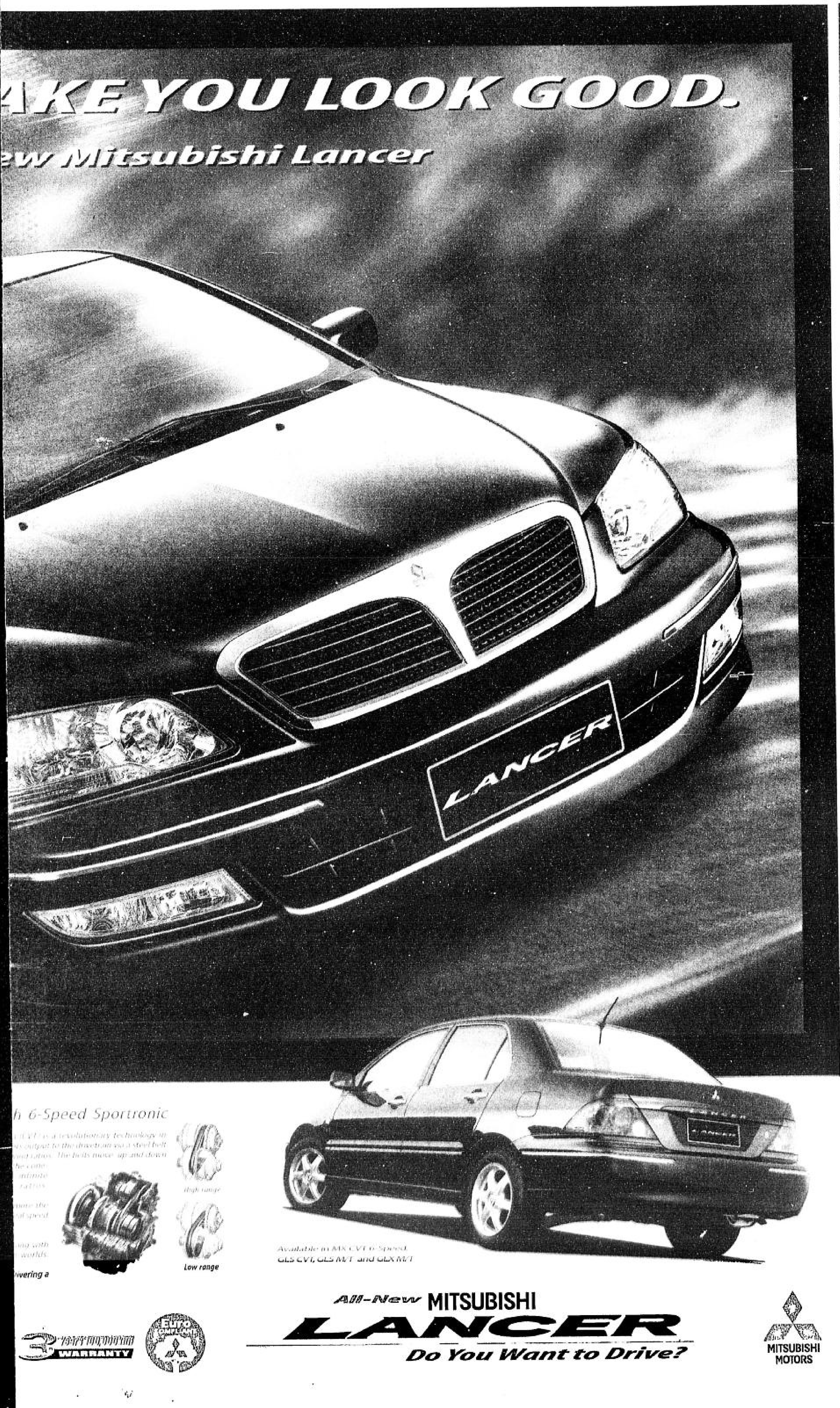
The government plans to rehire their workers for Transco and a new Napocor, which would be a subsidiary firm to the Public Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (Psalm) company. Psalm will auction the country's power facilities and other assets, guided by Epira's privatization program.

But Ortiz' announcement failed to appease the unions.

"They should not be making those kinds of guarantees. The (reorganization plan) we fought upgraded or altered the technical qualifications for the new power firms, and many of our members would no longer qualify," Salman said. "We are now trying to find ways to protect our members."

Salman said applications for the new government power firms started pouring in October last year, and Transco is ready to select its new employees this coming week.

The union leaders lobbied hard against the passage of Epira, believing that the deregulated industry would not spare consumers with high electricity rates. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



ESPANOLA

VELAZCO

PHOTOS FROM TOOTS SOBERANO

2 women cadets excel in PMA

By Gobleth Moulic
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—They received wild applause and cheers from their classmates on Thursday when they received their dean's list and commandant's list badges.

Cadet First Class Tara Velazco, who belongs to the graduating Class Mandarangan (Mandirigmang may Karangalan) of 2003, and Fourth Class Cadet Charo Espanola of PMA Class Mandala (Mandirigmang Dangal ng Lahi) of 2006, were among the 17 cadets honored for their exceptional performance in both academics and military tactics at the Philippine Military Academy here on Thursday.

A native of Camiling, Tarlac, Velazco was among the top academic achievers in this year's graduating class. The 103-member class has four female cadets.

Velazco said her worst nightmare is to be discharged from the academy, which she considers her "second home." She said she was relieved when she learned that she was the only female cadet in her graduating class honored for her exceptional performance in academics during the second term of 2002-2003.

Notes

"I owe it to my classmates and other lower classmen who gave me notes of good luck whenever I took exams in class. They always inspire me to do my best," she said.

Maj. Edgard Arevalo, PMA spokesperson, said 82 cadets received the dean's list badge for obtaining a term grade point average (TGPA) of at least 8.5, with no final grade lower than 7.5 in all courses.

The commandant's list badge, he said, was awarded to 54 cadets for obtaining a TGPA of at least 8.5, with no final grade lower than 7.5 in all courses offered by PMA's tactics group.

Cadet First Class Julius Taniza edged other awardees by receiving both the dean's list and commandant's list badges.

Taniza said he found international relations as the most challenging subject because he had to memorize various countries and their laws.

"But I found Army subjects very easy," he told the INQUIRER after he received his certificate during Thursday's academic convocation.

The other cadets honored for their exceptional performance in the academics and tactics subjects were Cadets First Class Frederick Emil Tapawan, Raymond de Leon, Alex Tejones and Jayrald Tamayo; Cadets Second Class Gerald Philip Escalante and Randy Eloreta; Cadet Third Class Michael Angelo Patron; and Cadets Fourth Class Carlos Ely Tingson, Efren Ryan Fajardo, Romel Sotero, Jimric Obias, Rey Argee Jabonete, Roy Ryan Bauding and John Gasataya.

Obstacles

Maj. Gen. Edilberto Adan, PMA superintendent, urged cadets to overcome obstacles during their stay in the century-old military academy so they could hold important positions in the military in the future.

Adan recited the four formulas for success in the military: "Know the key to your talents. What is inside you is what counts. Don't let others stop you. Capitalize on your strengths."

A total of 153 cadets were awarded the excellence badges for exceptional performance in academics.

Col. Tadeo Claravall, dean of the corps of professors, awarded four cadets, representing their respective classes, who emerged on top of the dean's list.

They were Cadet First Class Raymond de Leon, Cadet Second Class Marvin Inocencio, Cadet Third Class Brian Rayton and Cadet Fourth Class Ariel Toledo. *With a report from Toots Soberano*

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Samar townsfolk wait in vain for President

By Cyrain G. Cabuenas
PDI Visayas Bureau

SULAT, Eastern Samar—The euphoric atmosphere here turned unpalatable as a throng of delegates and onlookers waited in vain for President Macapagal-Arroyo and Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Juliano-Soliman to arrive on Saturday.

After a two-week preparation, the people were more than eager to welcome back the two who have already visited this town on separate occasions: the President, when she was still Vice President, and the DSWD secretary, during the oath-taking of Sulat Mayor Javier Zacate.

"It's not so comforting as it took us seven hours to get here and we arrived the day before just to secure our seats," several delegates from Northern and Western Samar said.

"Maybe they want us to meet them next elections, not today," others added.

Zacate brushed aside these sentiments.

"It is a great honor and privilege to have the President. But people should realize that she has a very tight schedule given the escalating conflicts in Central Mindanao and the impending war in Iraq," he said.

"Besides, she is supposed to launch her anti-poverty project, not sign autographs. We should even be grateful that our town was chosen one of the 11 pilot areas throughout the Philippines."

The President was to launch in this town the Kalahi (Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan) program, which represents the Macapagal administration's major program to combat poverty. The DSWD and World Bank-assisted program is community-based and participatory in nature. It fosters belongingness and transparency.

The President launched the program nationwide on Jan. 28 during the National Anti-Poverty Commission Sector's Day in Manila.

Still, hundreds of people flocked to greet the national representatives who came for the program launching. Among them were NAPC Chair Ging Deles and Vice Chair Oscar Francisco, DSWD Undersecretary Jaime Aristotle Alip, Kalahi director Alex Gloria and DSWD national coordinator Connie Acosta.

A larger crowd turned up at the plaza where different government agencies pitched booths to showcase their products. Medical and dental teams offered free services.

Deles said Sulat was chosen because it easily met the requirements of poor barangays, limited access to water, presence of nongovernment organizations, and active local officials.

"Besides anti-poverty campaigns, antiterrorism should be a priority drive," Eastern Samar Gov. Clotilde Japson-Salazar said.

"If we focus on poverty, we also focus on terrorism because terrorism happens when people are poor," Deles added.

Bill creates coffee research center

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

AMADEO, Cavite—The Pahimis coffee festival that ended here yesterday scored a major victory as Sen. Ramon Masaysay filed a bill creating a research center "that will promote and develop the local coffee industry."

In a speech delivered through his representative Augusto Catindig, Magsaysay announced that he filed Senate Bill 2491 last Tuesday. The bill paved the way for the creation of the Coffee Research, Development and Extension Center or Cordec.

"The demand for excellent varieties of coffee has created quite an impact that it is high time that we explore the viability of our local market," he said.

Magsaysay, chair of the Senate committee on food and agriculture, noted the growing popularity of coffee in the local market with the mushrooming of coffee bars in the metropolis.

According to the bill, Cordec will be solely devoted to research and development projects on coffee. It will also provide extension programs in line with the projects of the Bureau of Agriculture Research of the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry, and the National Economic and Development Authority.

The center will be initially located at the Cavite State University (CvSU) in Indang town. The university will also host the experimental and nursery areas.

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200 hectares of mangrove areas destroyed

By Jofelle Tesorio
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

OLD-GROWTH mangrove trees were not spared as fishpond areas were expanded in Quezon, Palawan. JOFELLE TESORIO

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Environmental agencies and non-government groups were shocked to find more than 200 hectares of deforested mangrove areas in Quezon town in southern Palawan, aside from the 15 hectares in this city that were converted into fishponds.

Fishpond operators have wantonly cut old-growth mangroves said to be 20 to 30 years old. Each tree, about 30 centimeters (one foot) in diameter, stands on a one square meter of land.

Kilusan Sagip Kalikasan (KSK) director Arthur Ventura confirmed the report of massive mangrove destruction in Sitio Tumarbong, Barangay Tabon in Quezon.

A team of the KSK, the environmental protection arm of the provincial government, and the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (Elac) inspected the site to determine the extent of damage and the culprits behind it.

They found eight new fishponds with an area of about 15 ha each. Outside of the newly developed fishponds were felled mangroves in areas intended for expansion.

The team found that several local government officials were allegedly involved in the mangrove destruction. Allegedly among them were Arnel Aureno, son of Quezon Mayor Eddie Aureno, and municipal development planning officer Ernesto Caabay.

Other fishpond owners were identified as Benjamin Cinco, Butch Belmonte, Teofilo Danggan and Ramy Ledesma.

Cinco admitted to owning one of the fishponds but said he was just doing what the mayor and his son have been doing.

Aureno denied involvement in the illegal cutting of mangrove and his ownership of several fishponds.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' provincial officer Rey Crisostomo said his office had yet to investigate the matter and determine if the fishpond owners have existing fishpond lease agreements (FLAs).

Crisostomo said he learned about the massive mangrove deforestation in Quezon only through media reports.

In the case of the mangrove cutting due to fishpond expansion in Barangay Tagabinet in this city, it took the DENR two years to issue a demolition order of the dikes in fishponds covered by expired FLAs.

The KSK and the Elac suspected that those in Quezon were not covered by FLAs.

Lawyer Grizelda Mayo-Anda, Elac executive director, said a mangrove rescue initiative would be launched this month to save the remaining mangrove forests in the province.

Cutting of mangroves is prohibited under Presidential Proclamation 2152. The law also declares Palawan a mangrove swamp forest reserve.

According to DENR Administrative Order No. 8, no renewal of FLAs shall be awarded after their expiration. The Fisheries Code prohibits cutting of mangrove trees for fishpond expansion.

About a third of the country's mangrove forest covers are found in Palawan.

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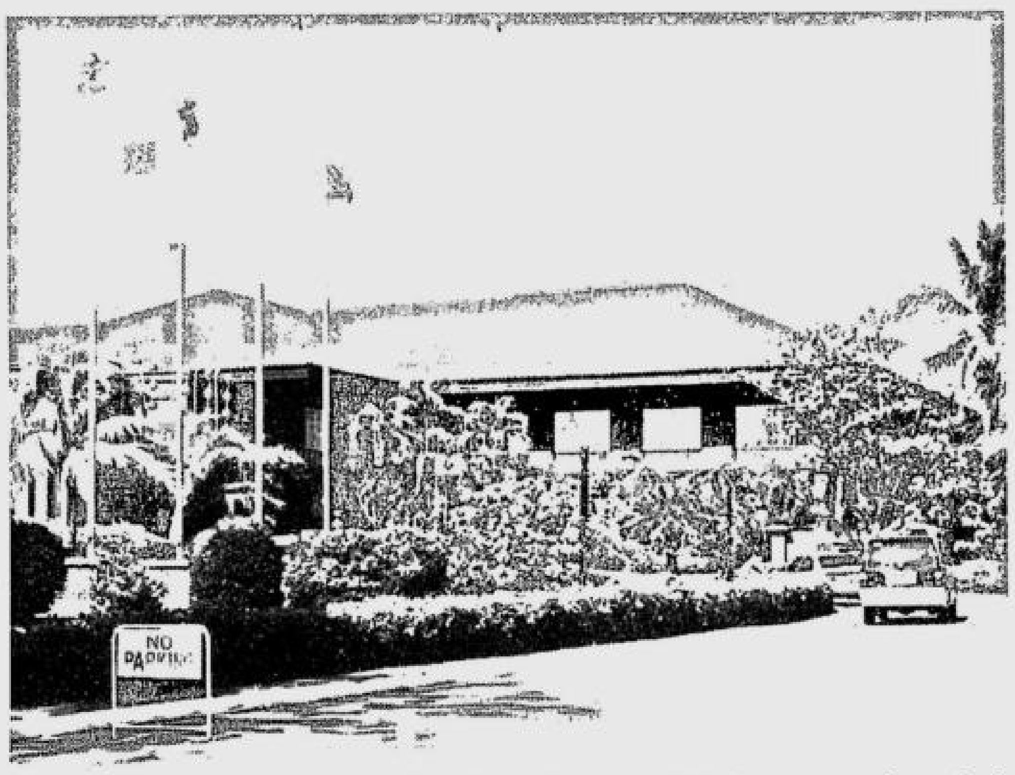
THE FORMERLY government-owned Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino was recently acquired by Chinese developers. CRISTINA ARZADON

TOURISM ZONE

Ilocos Norte sand dunes site of seething land feud

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

First of three parts

SPECIAL REPORT

LAOAG CITY—The Laoag sand dunes—a prime tourist zone that has emerged as a magnet for development—has become a ground for a seething land dispute all in the name of a flourishing tourism industry.

But residents want to know: "Development for whom?"

At the core of the dispute are residents engaged in small-scale businesses and a Hong Kong-based investor who had acquired a five-star resort-hotel formerly owned by the government.

Both are operating businesses on separate beachfront properties along the sand dunes of Calayab beach.

Only two years ago, business went as usual in the seaside village of Calayab whose major tourist drawer is the beach alongside kilometers of sand dunes that have been the site of movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s "Ang Panday" series.

But there were already indications as early as 2000 that the smooth business atmosphere would not last.

Tourism promotions shifted to the North in 2000, the same time that the Abu Sayyaf was sowing terror in popular tourism destinations in Mindanao.

Commitment

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon flew to Ilocos Norte during that period and signified the Department of Tourism's commitment to promote the province as an alternative tourist destination.

Apparently, Gordon had the Calayab beach in mind as one among primary tourism spots in the North that would jump-start local tourism and, in the process, catch the exodus of foreign and domestic tourists from the conflict-plagued destinations in the South.

By 2001, the indications became clearer when the Hong Kong-based developers, Fort Ilocandia Property Holdings and Development Corp. (FIPHDC), took over the Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino (FIRC) from its previous owners and proposed a multi-million-peso expansion program that would cover parcels of beachfront areas as expansion site.

The proposed expansion area would cover the beach where residents have been operating their businesses since the 1980s.

To Fredalyn Buyat, a long-time Calayab resident and one of the Calayab beach resort operators, the government's aggressive tourism promotion also meant another thing.

Displacement

It meant that "we would be driven away from the land we have nurtured and which have nurtured us back for nearly two decades to pave the way for investment," Buyat said.

It would also mean putting an end to a means of livelihood from which residents draw a steady income to send children to school, employ residents and improve their economic status.

Gordon, on the other hand, had shown his bias in favor of investment, never mind if such investment would mean the economic dislocation of homegrown businesses.

On his first few visits to Ilocos Norte beginning 2000, the presence of commercial structures along the shoreline immediately caught Gordon's attention.

Gordon had gone as far as making public his position to rid the shoreline of supposed obstructions because with structures, "(tourists) cannot use the beach effectively (since) there are unsightly areas (along the beach)."

Gordon's bias against local businesses apparently rubbed off on the local government as well because it had since muscled its way in an attempt to stop residents' operations.

Bias

When the land dispute between the developers and residents started brewing, the city government used the issue to effectively cease business operations by denying the residents permits to operate business.

Mayor Roger Fariñas found a convenient excuse to close down the beachfront establishments when the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) refused to issue provisional permits to the establishment owners beginning January 2002 while the disputed areas were being resolved.

Since 1992, Cenro has been issuing provisional permits to establishment owners to occupy the beachfront based on a foreshore lease agreement that they had applied for.

(Tomorrow: The conflict's beginnings)

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Applications will be accepted from faculty and staff of Philippine universities and professionals from both the public and private sectors. PAEF encourages applications from college and university faculty and staff who are enrolled in doctoral studies in the Philippines and plan to do one academic year of doctoral enrichment or dissertation research in the United States.

Application forms and additional information are available at the PAEF office, 10th Floor, Ayala Life/FGU Center – Makati, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City (or call 812-0919 or 812-0945). The forms can also be obtained from colleges and universities in the Philippines and the regional offices of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Forms can be downloaded from the PAEF website: www.paef.org.ph. Completed applications must be received by PAEF (not postmarked) on or before 30 May 2003.

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Awards will be made through open competition based on individual merit. Grantees must return to the Philippines immediately upon completion of their program in the United States.

Application forms are available at the PAEF office; the national, regional and provincial offices of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) of the Department of Agriculture; the national and regional offices of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED); state and private colleges and universities of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the Philippines; and the office of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Mission in the Philippines.

Completed applications must be received at the PAEF office (not postmarked) by May 30, 2003. An independent binational selection committee will review proposals. Those who make the preliminary review will be invited for interviews in August this year. Successful applicants will be notified of their candidacy in October 2003. They will be placed in appropriate programs and institutions in the United States and will travel to the U.S. to take up their awards beginning September 2004.

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Application forms can also be downloaded from the PAEF website: www.paef.org.ph

ANTI-WAR activists, including several Catholic priests and nuns, light candles and pray on the grounds of the Baguio Cathedral in Baguio City on Friday in anticipation of the final report to the United Nations by a UN team inspecting Iraq's nuclear and biological weapons. EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Davao Or. 'lumad' folk assail food blockade

BAGANGA, Davao Oriental—*Lumad* residents of hinterland villages here who have been affected by clashes between government troops and communist rebels since Feb. 1 have complained that the military was starving them.

They said the military had imposed a food blockade in Barangays Batawan, Batiano, Olin, Binondo and Kinablangan because New People's Army (NPA) rebels have purportedly taken refuge there.

The Alyansa sa mga Mag-uuma sa Sidlakang Dabaw charged that said Armyy soldiers of the 30th and the 27th Special Forces companies and the 26th and 36th Infantry nattalions were behind the food blockade.

The group said the food blockade was a gross violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Maj. Nixon Fortes, commander of the Army's 8th Special Forces Battalion, denied the allegations.

"There is no food blockade. We did not impose any food blockade. Why would the Army do such? The Army does not have operations like that," Fortes told the INQUIRER.

Since the clashes broke out on Feb. 1, five children have died in the crossfire.

The military reported that at least six rebels and two soldiers have died in the clashes.

"The military has restricted us from bringing food to our villages because they suspected that we are providing shelter and food to the fleeing rebels," Marta Alindong, 56, said.

Soldiers would only allow a family of six to bring in 10 to 15 kilos of rice from Baganga poblacion.

At least 1,500 *lumad* families were affected by the food blockade.

Renante Magno, of Barangay Binondo, complained that the military had seized sacks of rice, noodles, sardines and dried fish that he bought from the public market in Baganga.

"I did not know that the military has already imposed a food blockade," Magno told the INQUIRER.

He said the soldiers refused to return his goods.

"They told me they would only return these when their operations in our villages are over. It's really frustrating," he said.

The Baganga Farmers Association denounced the food blockade, saying civilians should be spared from the war.

In Zamboanga del Norte, a Cafgu member was wounded after NPA rebels attacked a paramilitary detachment in Barangay Tinuyop in Leon Postigo town on Monday.

The rebels also seized three M-16 rifles and a hand-held radio. They also burned two Army bunkers before withdrawing toward Barangay Nasibac. *Ferdinand O. Zuasola and Lullie A. Micabalo with a report by Joselle R. Badilla and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GMA hit for gov't offensive vs MILF

BAGUIO CITY—The Baguio leg of a nationwide anti-war protest rally hit President Macapagal-Arroyo for the ongoing military offensive against Moro rebels in North Cotabato "that could aggravate the impact on the Philippines of an American war on Iraq."

The war against Iraq, a Muslim nation, will already have a serious religious and social backlash against the predominantly Christian Philippines, said Joan Carling, chair of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA).

"But it is clear that by launching a preemptive strike against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Tuesday, the government seeks to ensure that no large Muslim military retaliation would be hurled at this government should the United States attack Iraq in the next few weeks," Carling said.

CPA members joined two Protestant bishops, several Catholic priests and nuns, and about 300 activists and students, on the Baguio Cathedral grounds on Friday. Muslim clerics and officials of the Office of Muslim Affairs here were also invited but neither they nor their representatives showed up.

The anti-war advocates lighted candles and sat in prayer in anticipation of the final report to the United Nations by a UN inspection team that is monitoring Iraq's inventory of nuclear and biological weapons.

But it was the military offensive on the Buliok complex near Pikit, North Cotabato, which drew their attention. *(See story on Page A1.)*

"It's like the Macapagal administration is saying that war is inevitable and attacking (Moro rebels) as a preemptive maneuver is its only option," she said.

The anti-war groups said Ms Macapagal should enforce a ceasefire that she had earlier ordered but which the military apparently defied.

Carling said peace talks were already underway when both the AFP and the MILF clashed in Pikit in "an apparent act of bad faith."

In his prayer, Bishop Allan Ray Sarte of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines-North Luzon Jurisdiction said the US war footing against Iraq was aimed at controlling nations under a regiment of global free trade.

"(The Philippines) needs to gamble our faith and religion because we want peace and love," said a Catholic priest.

Geannette Galvez, secretary general of the Tongtongan Ti Umili, said the US' impending war on Iraq would result in greater suffering for all people of the world, particularly Iraqis, who have endured the effects of the 1991 Gulf War. *Vincent Cabreza with a report from Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ex-US Marine falls in drug bust

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A former US Marine corporal was arrested Thursday in a drug bust operation conducted by the Philippine National Police and the city government's Task Force on Drug Enforcement Action Division (Task Force DEAD).

Edward John Kaiser, 65, an American temporarily residing in Barangay Bancao-bancao here, was arrested in his house at around 9 a.m.

Allegedly found in his possession were shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) paraphernalia, such as rolling paper, and an undetermined volume of marijuana.

Douglas Hagedorn, head of the Task Force DEAD, said the American had been under surveillance since last week after receiving reports from informants.

Kaiser, a native of Hawaii, admitted using marijuana but not shabu. He said he started using marijuana when he was assigned in Vietnam during the war.

The paraphernalia found in his house were not his, he said. Some people, he alleged, were bringing the items to him.

Kaiser, who is now detained at the city police station, was still tipsy when authorities went to his house as he had been drinking early in the morning.

Kaiser has been staying in Palawan since 1999 after retiring from the US Marine Corps. He said he originally came from Florida and New York.

Hagedorn said charges would be filed against the American after informing the US Embassy about his case.

Despite efforts of authorities, proliferation of illegal drugs in the province remains one of the biggest problems of law enforcers.

Palawan police director Michael Garraez said the city and 14 of the 23 municipalities were not drug-free.

He said lawmen's efforts had been concentrating on Culion and Coron, the alleged transshipment points of illegal drugs.

In 2002, The police provincial office has seized more than 600 grams of shabu and 80 grams of marijuana while 21 have been arrested for using and peddling illegal drugs. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

German vows not to return after maul rap

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A German economist accused of stabbing a retired American Marine during a heated argument over the impending US attack on Iraq is now free to leave the country after the court dismissed the charges filed against him.

But Frank Oesterle can no longer come back to the Philippines as a promise under the settlement agreement he entered into with John Flynn.

Judge Victor Teves of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court covering the towns of Moalboal, Badian and Alcantara dismissed the frustrated murder charges against Oesterle after Flynn executed an affidavit of desistance.

Teves said in open court on Wednesday that Flynn voluntarily executed the affidavit. He said the police in Moalboal, about 90 km southwest of here, had also filed a motion to dismiss the case.

"Nobody threatened, forced or promised him (Flynn) any reward in deciding to execute the affidavit of desistance," the judge said.

SPO3 Henry Obiso, police chief of Moalboal, said Oesterle and Flynn signed a settlement agreement in front of the judge.

Under the agreement, Obiso said Oesterle would pay P50,000 to Flynn as reimbursement for the American's hospital expenses.

Oesterle also promised never to return to the Philippines in deference to the request of Flynn, he added.

Obiso said he did not know if the promise of Oesterle not to return to the Philippines was legally binding.

In his order, Teves said Flynn had accepted the German's apology. The two, he said, had shaken hands before the court.

The judge also cancelled the P20,000 bail posted by Oesterle. But the amount would be given to Flynn as partial payment.

Flynn landed in the hospital after Oesterle stabbed him on Jan. 31 inside a videoke bar of the Panagsama Beach Resort in Barangay Basdiot, Moalboal.

The two were drinking inside the bar when they argued over the looming US attack on Iraq.

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Ballroom Foyer
9:15 - 9:20 **Welcome Remarks**
9:20 - 10:00 **Session 1**
THE WORLD IN 2003
With war on the horizon which way will the global economy turn?
10:00 - 10:40 **Session 2**
THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY IN 2003
After a better than expected year in 2002, can growth be sustained?
10:40 - 11:00 Coffee Break
11:00 - 12:00 **Session 3**
TAMING THE DEFICIT
Sourcing the funds to fill the deficit. Its implications on your business and interest rates.
12:00 - 1:30 pm Networking Lunch
The Conservatory
1:30 - 2:30 **Session 4**
UNBLOCKING NON PERFORMING ASSETS IN THE BANKING SYSTEM
SPAV and its impact on the economy
2:30 - 3:15 **Session 5**
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS JUAN DE LA CRUZ?
The OFWs importance to the Philippine economy
3:15 - 3:40 Coffee Break
3:40 - 4:40 **Session 6**
THE POLITICS OF 2004
The public mood in a pre-election year
4:40 - 4:45 Closing Session

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Fraudulent medical claims exposed

LUCENA CITY—At least 20 hospitals in Southern Tagalog are on the watchlist of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. on suspicion of processing fraudulent medical claims, according to Christina Chua, officer of the Accreditation Unit of the agency's Region IV-A office.

Dr. Santiago Abaricia, chief of the quality assurance unit of PhilHealth Region IV-A, declined to identify the hospitals, saying they were still being investigated by his agency's central office.

Chua said PhilHealth was trying to curb the proliferation of illegal claims of medical payment through continuous monitoring in order to maintain the integrity of the health insurance system.

"We interact with confined patients as one form of preventing fraudulent claims," Chua added.

Dr. Carmelita Laureano, PhilHealth assistant vice president in the region, conceded that it would be impossible for them to achieve the goal of "universal coverage" for all Filipinos in 15 years due to the country's increasing population.

"We could not cope with the population boom. We now have to be more practical and doable in our setting of goal. From 100 percent, we now settle for 85 percent," Laureano said.

PhilHealth is on its eighth year as a government-owned and controlled corporation, spearheading the implementation of the country's premier social health insurance program.

PhilHealth, which took over the administration of the former Medicare program for government and private sector employees, now has 16 regional offices and 74 service offices in key cities and provinces.

The branches serve almost 40 million PhilHealth members nationwide in providing medical insurance benefits in four major membership sectors: employed, individually paying, non-paying and sponsored (indigent) sectors.

To maximize the benefits to its members and avoid the "unscrupulous" practices by some physicians, Laureano advised PhilHealth members to categorically ask for the professional fee of the attending physician.

She explained that the move aimed to prevent the doctor from also collecting the PhilHealth payment allotted to him when the patient has already paid the corresponding professional fee.

Laureano lamented that Quezon is far behind Cavite and Laguna in the total number of PhilHealth membership.

She called on provincial officials to help enroll all the qualified indigents in their areas so that they can avail themselves of the benefits being provided by the health insurance system. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Illegal fishing

TAGBILARAN CITY—The Bohol Environmental Management Office (Bemo) has sent to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Central Visayas a petition to cancel the licenses of registered commercial fishing boats found intruding in the province's municipal waters. Bohol is the first province to tap 10 lawyers from the Environmental Legal Assistance Center and the Provincial Legal Office to handle cases involving coastal law enforcement. The Bemo, which is under the Office of the Governor, received 10 plaques of appreciation last year for its support to various environmental agenda in the province. ***Chito A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau***

New Army head

CATBALOGAN, Samar—Brig. Gen. Glenn Raboza is the new commander of the 8th Infantry Division based in Camp Lukban, Barangay Maulong here. He took over the command from Maj. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, who was promoted to chief of the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command based in Tarlac City. Before his assignment here, Raboza, a native of Kidapawan City, was deputy chief of the Army's intelligence division. ***Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Fire razes 200 homes

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A noontime fire hit Barangay Lapasan here on Wednesday, displacing 258 families. No casualty was reported but authorities estimated the damage at P12.2 million. The fire lasted about two hours and gobbled up more than 200 houses, mostly made of light materials. ***Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Seair flight

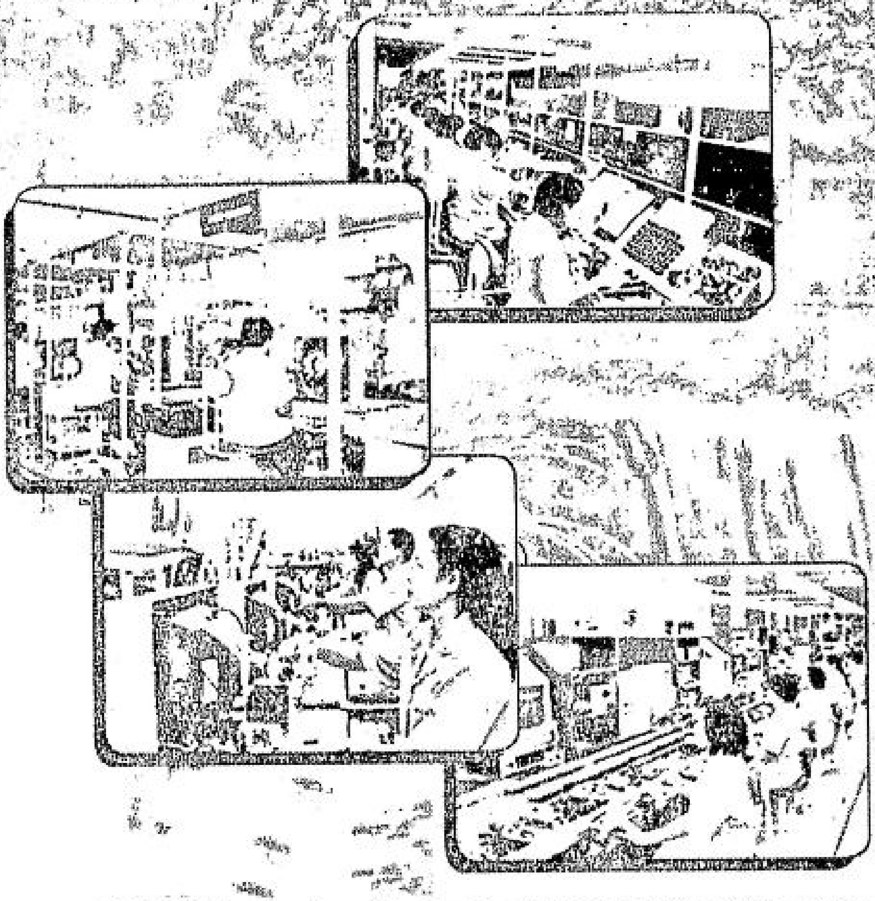
CALAPAN CITY—The South East Asian Airlines (Seair) had its initial flight, timed at 30 minutes from Manila to Calapan City, through its 18-seat turbo-engine plane on Sunday. Oriental Mindoro Gov. Bartolome Marasigan Sr., said the air flight was timely for the establishment of the Mindoro-Marinduque-Romblon-Palawan (Mimaropa) Regional Center in the city and the province as a gateway to Southern Philippines. City Mayor Arnan Panaligan said the visit of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon would boost tourism, trade and industry in the province. ***Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

99 criminals nabbed

LEGAZPI CITY—Chief Supt. Rodolfo Tor, Bicol police chief, said 91 members of 22 criminal gangs in Bicol had been arrested and charged before the courts. Among those captured was Julito Leosala, alias Commander Awa, Bicol's most wanted person, who for the past years had been victimizing businessmen in Albay and Sorsogon before he was killed recently by police. ***Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Panasonic establishes the First Lead-Free TV Factory

Matsushita Electric Philippines Corporation (MEPCO), maker of National and Panasonic brands of electric and electronic appliances marked another breakthrough with its establishment of the first lead-free television factory in the country.



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HEALTH ADVISORY

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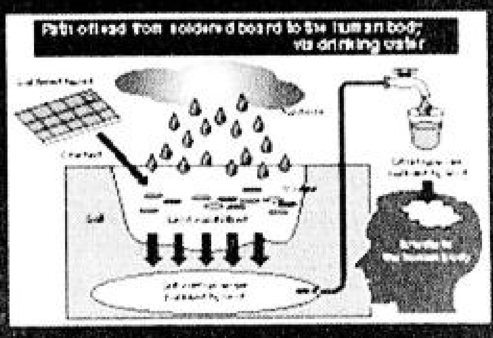
Path of lead from soldered board to the human body via drinking water

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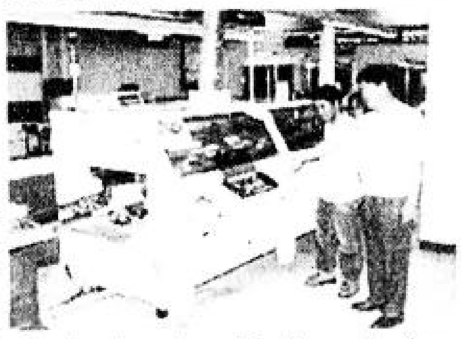

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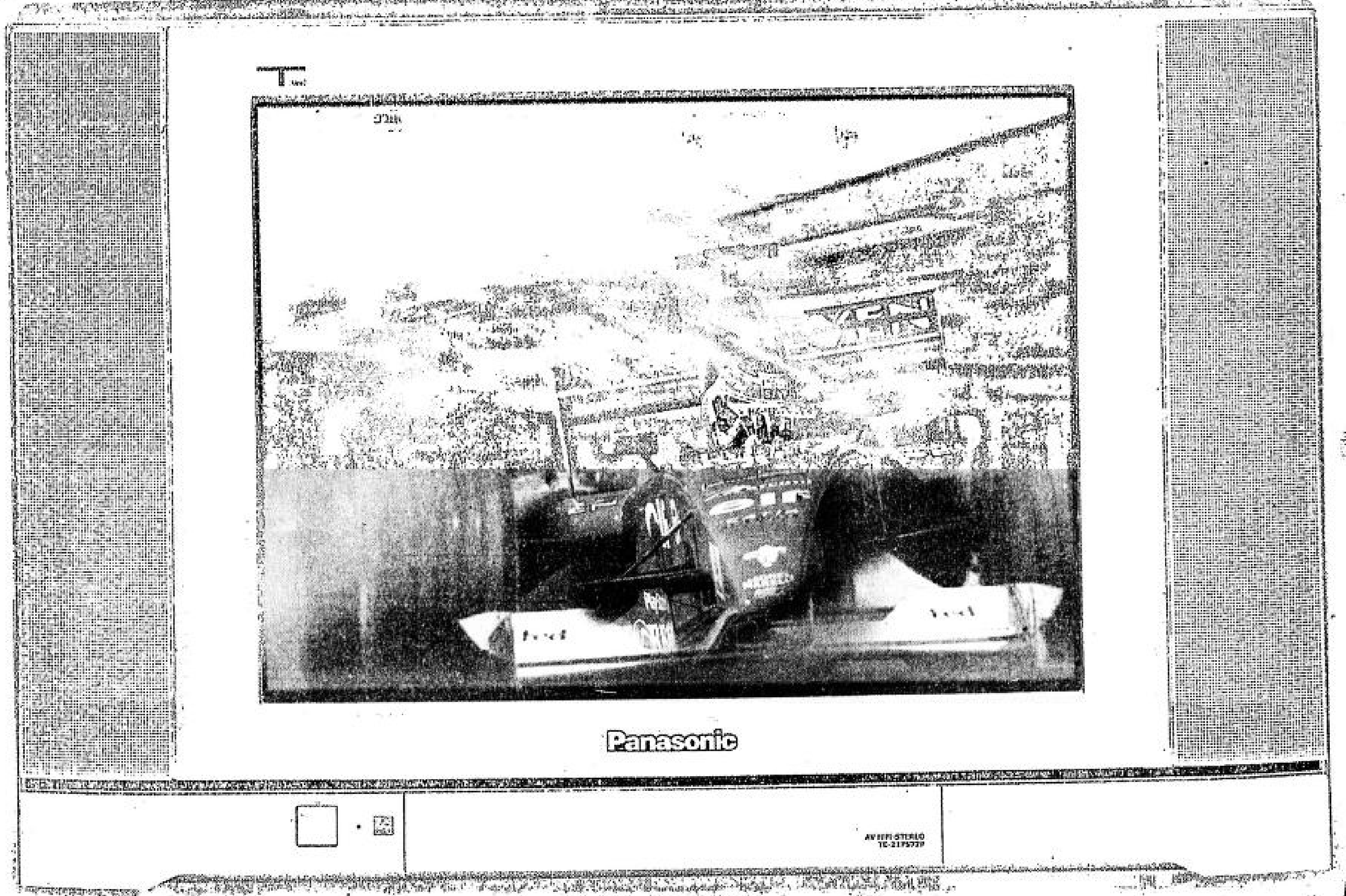

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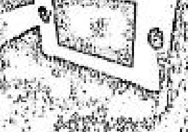

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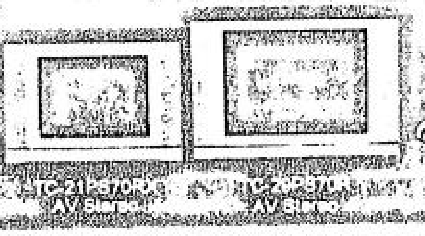

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Millions march for peace

From page A1

in the city's biggest mass action ever—-a slap to the face of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who supports Bush's initiative. Another 600,000 brought the city center of Madrid to a standstill, while about 100,000 more took to the streets in other cities.

In Rome, Italy, about a million people marched through the ancient streets under a sea of rainbow peace banners. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has also backed the US hardline stance.

In London, England, home to Bush's staunchest ally, Prime Minister Tony Blair, some 750,000 crowded the streets in what police officials said was the biggest demonstration in the city's history. Organizers said the total may have reached as high as 2 million.

In Sydney, about 150,000 marched on Friday. The following day, a bigger crowd of 200,000 descended on the city's Hyde Park to plead for peace. The banner-waving crowd of protesters, many middle-aged with children and some in wheelchairs, banged drums and chanted Vietnam war-era protest songs as they brought Sydney traffic to a standstill.

"We want our prime minister to listen to us. We don't want war with Iraq," said 34-year-old Thomas Aiken, a doctor, as he balanced his young son on his shoulders.

Australia is one of Washington's firmest allies and has deployed around 2,000 troops to the Middle East. Prime Minister John Howard has reaffirmed his support for Bush's stance.

In Canada, another close US ally, about 100,000 people demonstrated in frigid Montreal. On the West Coast, a long, winding march of 25,000 protesters clogged the streets of Vancouver.

But the massive protests, reminiscent of the anti-war rallies of the Vietnam era, also took place in countries whose governments actively oppose an attack on Iraq.

Several hundred thousand marched across France, with up to a quarter of a million parading in Paris.

In Berlin, Germany, half a million people, ranging from schoolchildren to pensioners, turned out for one of the largest rallies held in Germany since World War II.

Rallies were reported in dozens of other European cities, including Amsterdam (70,000), Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Sofia, Bern (40,000) and Brussels, with up to 80,000 in Dublin, and tens of thousand across Scandinavia.

MADRID'S Puerta del Sol Square is filled with tens of thousands.

AP

OVER 25,000 gather at Dam's Square in Amsterdam.

AFP

Police estimated that 60,000 turned out in Oslo, Norway; 50,000 in bitter cold in Brussels; while about 35,000 gathered peacefully in frigid Stockholm.

Crowds were estimated at 30,000 in Glasgow, Scotland; 25,000 in Copenhagen; 15,000 in Vienna; 5,000 in Cape Town and 4,000 in Johannesburg in South Africa; 5,000 in Tokyo and 2,000 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

In Moscow, several hundred communists protested outside the US Embassy, brandishing banners saying: "Bush, hands off Iraq" and "Bush go away, you are Hitler today."

In Athens, violence broke out on the sidelines of a demonstration, with rioters throwing Molotov cocktails at a government building.

Tens of thousands turned out in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to demonstrate against war.

"No war in our name," said Mairead Maguire, a leading activist in the search for reconciliation between the estranged Roman Catholic and Protestant communities of the divided British province.

Tommaso Palladini, 56, who traveled from Milan to Rome, said, "You don't fight terrorism with a preventive war. You fight terrorism by creating more justice in the world."

Protest actions in the United States were also large and loud.

Police estimated some 100,000 joined a four-hour rally a few blocks away from the UN headquarters in New York.

In Los Angeles, some 30,000 protested the imminent US-led war. The marchers who walked down Hollywood's celebrated Walk of Fame to Sunset Boulevard were led by actor Martin Sheen, who plays a US president in the popular television series "West Wing."

Smaller US protests of several thousand each were held in Chicago, Philadelphia and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Aside from Los Angeles, protest actions in California were also held in San Diego, San Jose and Sacramento.

Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu addressed the New York crowd. "You will never have true security that comes from the barrel of a gun," Tutu said.

"The just war (doctrine) says you have exhausted all possible and peaceful means, and the world says, 'No, we haven't,'" he added.

Hollywood stars Susan Sarandon and Danny Glover were among the speakers. Sarandon accused the Bush administration of "hijacking" the national fears engendered by the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Among the protesters were relatives of the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks, who marched under the umbrella banner "9/11 Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow." Several placards read "Thank You France and Germany"—referring to those countries' opposition to a military conflict.

Middle East, Asia

Across the Middle East, hundreds of thousands also railed at the prospect of war, with Kalashnikov-toting protesters filing through Baghdad, and rallies in Syria and Lebanon.

Even in Israel, in a rare sign of unity, 3,000 Jews and Arabs marched together in Tel Aviv.

Some 200,000 Syrians demonstrated in Damascus, with one banner reading: "Axis of Evil: America, Britain, Israel."

In Iraq itself, two massive anti-war rallies filled Baghdad streets, with many protesters carrying guns. "With our blood, with our soul, we will redeem you, Saddam," the crowd chanted.

Thousands of South Africans, including three government ministers, lined the streets of Cape Town, bearing placards saying "Bombs kill babies" and "There's a terrorist behind every Bush."

In North Africa, a small group also demonstrated in Algiers, where demonstrations are banned because of the emergency security situation in Algeria.

There was also a march of some 1,000 in the Moroccan capital of Rabat, where protesters berated Arab governments for not doing enough to help Iraq.

However, calls for daily protest vigils in Turkish cities apparently got off to a slow start, with few residents heeding calls to rally in city centers and to turn out their lights in the evening as a sign of support.

Numbers were tiny in Asian Muslim nations. Just 300 turned out in Karachi, 500 in Jakarta and 1,000 in Dhaka. Jakarta was the scene of a much larger protest last weekend, which attracted at least 7,000 people.

"The main reason why the scale of protests is small in Japan and elsewhere in Asia is that ordinary people think the issue will not directly affect their life," said Akira Kawasaki, a 34-year-old activist.

Malaysian peace campaigners have garnered more than a million signatures in a government-backed push against war in Iraq, a minister said.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, the country's most prominent Christian, hailed the worldwide protests.

"They show the conscience of mankind against crime and against aggression," Aziz told Reuters television in Italy, where he prayed for peace.

President Saddam Hussein told an envoy of Pope John Paul II that the United States wanted to attack Iraq because it was a Muslim country. *Reports from AFP, Reuters and AP*

Dissident seeks Pinoy aid in ousting Saddam

A VISITING Iraqi dissident said the Iraqi people "will welcome the day that Saddam Hussein's dictatorship is overthrown."

Dr. Hussain al-Shahristani, a nuclear physicist who was jailed and tortured by the Saddam regime from 1979 to 1991 for refusing to work on atomic weapons, said he was able to escape during the Gulf War in 1991-92.

He now heads the United Kingdom-based Iraqi Refugee Aid Council which assists victims of the regime. He is a visiting professor at the University of Surrey and an author on human rights abuses in Iraq.

He was chief scientific adviser of the Iraqi atomic energy commission in Baghdad.

Al-Shahristani confirmed that "Saddam has used chemical and biological weapons against the Iraqi people, like the Marsh Arabs and the Turks."

He said Iraqis "will not accept anything less than a true democracy" in place of Saddam.

AL-SHANRISTANI

AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

"Iraqis yearn for freedom like anyone else," he said, while asking for the support of the Filipino people and government in getting rid of Saddam.

He predicted that a democratic Iraq "will be a model for other countries in the Middle East when it moves toward democracy."

He said the Filipino overseas workers in Iraq would also be much better off when democracy is established there. *D. J. Bocobo*

US, UK face int'l isolation for war policy on Iraq

From page A1

the pitch of US Secretary of State Colin Powell for an early war. "We cannot allow this process [inspection] to be endlessly strung out," Powell said. He stressed that UN Resolution No. 1441, calling on Iraq to disarm, was not about inspection but about disarmament.

"To this day we have not seen the level of cooperation that was ... hoped for," Powell said. "Force must always be a last resort but it must be a resort ... We must continue to put pressure on Iraq, put force on Iraq, make sure that the threat of force is not removed."

The remarks of council members after the presentations of Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of nuclear inspection, not only showed the United States and Britain were in the minority. The consensus of the 13 in favor of further inspection foreshadowed the powerful obstacle faced by Washington and London in their plan to seek a second resolution authorizing the use of force on Iraq for breaching Resolution 1441. It further represented a diplomatic setback in the United Nations for the US-led "coalition of the willing" backing war.

A counter-coalition is led by France and is backed by Russia, Germany, and China in the Security Council. France, Russia and China are veto-wielding permanent members (there are five) of the council.

The rebuff, indicating the possible profile of the council vote on a second resolution, has given the United States and Britain second thoughts on whether to seek an early vote this week. The setback was the first diplomatic showdown between the two alliances—the first led by the United States and the other by France.

The setback appeared to have stalled the momentum of the US diplomatic offensive in the United Nations to win support for a second resolution. De Villepin and the Russian foreign minister were applauded during their comments. By contrast, Powell's remarks were coldly received by the gallery.

Biggest anti-war demos

The increasing isolation of the Anglo-American war was not only being starkly drawn within the United Nations; it was also being played out on the stage of international public opinion. Over the weekend, several millions of people all over the world went to the streets in the biggest anti-war demonstration since the Vietnam War. *(See banner story on Page A1.)*

Large demonstrations marched in London, Paris, Berlin and New York, and smaller ones in Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur and also in Manila, where Filipinos are protesting the uncritical support of the Macapagal administration for the US war policy.

Not since the Vietnam War has there been a manifestation of anti-Americanism around the world, a phenomenon dismissed by the Bush administration as a protest against its policy and not against the American nation and people.

The widening rift, however, between France, Germany and Russia, on the one hand, and the United States and Britain, on the other, over Iraq is partly fueled by European resentment of the heavy-handed translation by the United States of its doctrine of "preemptive strike" against perceived threats to American security and of unilateralism in foreign policy.

The United States now faces the option of whether to make an early strike without a new UN mandate.

US public opinion

The international protest, unleashed after the second report of the UN inspectors, received resonance in the United States. The latest New York Times/CBS News Poll showed that 59 percent of Americans said they believed President George W. Bush should give the United Nations more time. Sixty-three percent said the United States should not act without the support of its allies, and 56 percent said Bush should wait for UN approval.

Bush's overall job rating dropped to 54 percent from 64 percent a month ago, his lowest rating since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The report of the UN inspectors was expected by the Bush administration to strengthen its case for an early war, but it fell short of expectations. This prompted the left-of-center Guardian newspaper in London to say that "Hans Blix has kicked away the stool supporting the already wobbly US-British case for war against Iraq."

The paper said the report "considerably increases the chances that the US will act unilaterally, dragging Britain in its wake. It sharply diminishes the prospect of UN backing for a second resolution authorizing military action."

Saddam's order

Blix reported that his teams had not found any weapons of mass destruction, but he noted that Iraq had not accounted for any banned weapons.

He said the impression of Iraqi cooperation remains, access to sites has so far been without problems, and Iraq has agreed to U-2 overflights and interviews of its scientists.

He also cited a decree issued by Saddam Hussein ordering a ban on the production of weapons of mass destruction, a decision promptly noted by British Foreign Minister Jack Straw as coming too late after more than 10 years of evasion.

"One must not jump to the conclusion that (weapons not accounted for) exist. However, that possibility is also not excluded," Blix said. "If they exist, they should be presented for destruction. If they do not exist, credible evidence to that effect should be presented. Although I can understand that it may not be easy for Iraq in all cases to provide the evidence needed, it is not the task of the inspectors to find it. Iraq itself must squarely tackle this task and avoid belittling the questions."

It is the unaccounted weapons that worry the United States and its allies. Blix also reported findings by a panel of experts that one of Iraq's new missile systems exceeds the range set by Security Council resolutions.

But Blix went out of his way to contradict evidence presented by Powell to the council on Feb. 5. Blix referred to satellite photos displayed by Powell accusing Iraq of cleaning up sites before the inspectors arrived.

Blix said that "the reported movement of munitions at the site could just as easily have been a routine activity as a movement of proscribed munitions in anticipation of imminent inspection."

The majority in the council seized on the "progress" being made by the inspectors to make a case for further inspection and thereby avert a plunge to war.

Task force . . .

From page A1

eral Hermogenes Ebdane had told him to just concentrate on finding the alleged mastermind of the murder of Baron Cervantes, self-styled spokesperson of the Young Officers' Union.

Maganto said he had been ordered by Ebdane on Saturday to turn over the partial results of the Kintanar investigation to the Central Police District, the original lead investigating team.

The dissolution of Task Force Kintanar came two days before the showing of Maganto's third bio-pic, "The Legend: Tomagan." His critics had claimed that the much publicized investigation was meant to promote his new movie.

Maganto refused to divulge the reason behind the abolition of the task force.

"I have no problem [with his decision]," he said. "He [Ebdane] told me I would soon be asked to work on another project."

A source in the Philippine National Police said Maganto was eased out of the job for disclosing the sensitive details of the case to the press.

"He was uncontrollable; he was disclosing details that were not supposed to be disclosed," the source said, noting that the last straw came when Maganto bared in a press conference that two government employees who allegedly set up Kintanar for liquidation would be charged as accomplices.

Relying on Maganto's track record against communist insurgents, President Macapagal-Arroyo had personally tapped the outspoken police general to go after members of an NPA hit squad believed to be behind Kintanar's assassination on Jan. 23.

The Communist Party of the Philippines owned up to the killing two days later. The CPP said it was "absolutely correct" for the NPA, its armed wing, to punish Kintanar, who it said had been found guilty by a "people's court" of involvement in criminal activities like bank robberies and kidnapping for ransom and in helping the military campaign against the NPA.

Promise

Early in the investigation, Maganto tagged two top National Housing Authority (NHA) officials as those who allegedly set up the murder.

Maganto had promised to file murder charges against NHA managers Higino Equipaje and Guillermo Gudoy. The two officials denied involvement in the killing.

He said he could not keep that promise as he would focus his work on the Cervantes case.

If Homobono Adaza had his way, however, Maganto should not lead the investigation of the Cervantes murder.

Adaza, lawyer of Supt. Rafael Cardeño, the alleged mastermind of the Cervantes murder, yesterday asked the President and the police hierarchy to throw Maganto back into the "freezer."

Adaza claimed Maganto had not produced substantial results in the Cervantes and the Kintanar cases.

"He was merely creating illusions (in the media)," the lawyer said in a phone interview. "Cases like these are graveyards for investigators. It would be better for him to get back to the freezer and wait for better days."

Maganto had been on floating status for more than a year before the President assigned him to hunt down the killers of Cardeño, who was shot dead on Dec. 31, 2001 for allegedly naming people behind a coup plot against the Macapagal administration.

Maganto lashed out at Adaza, noting that he had been working barely two months on the Cervantes case, and less than a month on the Kintanar murder.

History Town rises in new Intramuros

From page A1

cal and foreign guests.

"Intramuros is a statement that we can reverse our culture of subservience, our pessimism," Gordon said Friday night in the course of taking the INQUIRER for a run-through.

The Spanish colonizers "excluded us with these walls," he noted. "Now we are symbolically tearing down these walls, by making Intramuros a place where we can show the Filipino soul."

From dark to light

The transformation is centered on the grid bordered by Anda, Real, Santa Potenciana, Victoria, Muralla, Arzobispo, Santa Lucia and General Luna streets, which basically cover the blocks hemmed in by the Palacio del Gobernador and the Club Intramuros golf course.

It's hard to miss. Commuters can take jeepneys plying the Pier route up till the Manila Cathedral and take the tour on foot from there. For motorists, there are guarded parking spaces along A. Soriano (in front of the Cathedral), Bonifacio Drive, P. Burgos and Revellin de Recoletos (in front of Mapua). Or else you can park on any side street, where building security guards seem to have been instructed to do their part by providing this assistance.

Rig drivers have been organized as well, and made to wear huge IDs. For P250, a party of three can take a *kalesa* ride around the "new" tourist village. The cochero points out landmarks and recent installations, and insists that his passengers get down and explore an interesting spot or two.

The whole area was dark and menacing, marked with crumbling ruins and decrepit warehouses, until the DOT and Gordon's "volunteers" from the private sector descended on it.

"The first time I saw it, there was human excrement on the ramparts and the corners reeked of urine. The place also had a reputation as a dumping ground for salvage victims," Gordon said.

There had been efforts of "preservation and restoration," he said, but these were "never really an attempt to make it a people place," and "not that successful."

Now History Town Philippines is a happening community where, by day, marching bands play a fiesta soundtrack for early promenaders who can watch handicraft demonstrations, native martial arts exercises, on-the-spot art lessons, and indigenous games like *patintero, bunong-braso, tumbang-preso* and even *sabong*.

A wide variety of food shops offer the range "from fish balls to steaks."

By night, the streets are lit by hundreds of lampposts, 200 of them only recently installed, and the ancient trees sparkle with capiz lanterns and possibly a hundred thousand Christmas lights.

The center of marketing activity is a giant P20-million tent that serves as showroom for the region being promoted by the DOT each month ("the best" of Region 4 or Southern Tagalog is February's feature).

Called the Clam Shell, the tent is fully air-conditioned, and houses specialized shops offering food products, handicraft and fashion finery. Travel agencies have set up desks where they accept bookings.

The tent also doubles as a venue for daily cultural shows featuring performers from the regions.

Plus, the toilets are clean—with running water and toilet paper in huge dispensers.

Night trip

Activities take on a heightened pitch by nightfall, when the ruins and manicured lawns are transformed into outdoor theaters for musical performances or fireworks displays.

On the Valentine's Night that the INQUIRER was there, a brass quartet played the classics, while at a nearby lawn a jazz band from the UST Conservatory of Music opened its set with a saxophone solo of "Misty."

A *kundiman* troupe in native garb held court on a sidewalk, and on the main concert grounds—a few paces away from which beer and barbecue could be had—Joey Ayala was the star.

Soon to open at the building called Beaterio de Campana de Jesus is a "light and sound" museum on Philippine history, from the pre-colonial times to the martyrdom of Jose Rizal, "the Filipino genius who was the first to break through what the Walls of Intramuros symbolized."

For enthusiasts of contemporary plays, within walking distance is the Rajah Sulayman theater inside Fort Santiago. Classic Filipino films are shown at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts auditorium on General Luna and Victoria streets.

According to Gordon, Intramuros is the Philippines' latest effort to corner foreign tourists, especially those who chose to go "regional, travelling within Asia" following the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

On Feb. 5, some 850 Taiwanese tourists were among the first to see the new Walled City. A group of 30 Japanese business executives visited on Feb. 13.

Gordon said two Chinese businessmen and a Spanish tourism official were considering opening hotels and restaurants in the area.

Asked about the prospects of Philippine tourism should a war erupt in Iraq and reignite a global scare, Gordon said: "We can easily bounce back especially if the war would be a short one."

Before the exchange got any gloomier, he punched his trademark optimistic note: "Let's not make our problems bigger than they are. Intramuros is all about reversing that thinking."

For the full schedule of Intramuros activities, visit www.wowphilippines.com or call 527-3138, 527-3155, or 527-2961.

Pinoys set record . . .

From page A1

who led the crowd at the Quirino Grandstand, said the department ran out of number tags given to participants by around 8 a.m. The DOH printed up to 100,000 tags.

Many of the participants were bussed from Metro Manila and the nearby province of Cavite. Others came from various organizations and government agencies.

"We would have been happy with 50,000 people ... [but] there was such a huge response. Everybody was just excited to get some exercise," a pleasantly surprised Dayrit told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

He said many of the participants came "not just to break the record, but to have fun as well," typical of Filipinos who usually take time out on weekends to go to the malls or parks with their families.

The DOH will submit the video footage and other documentation of the event to the Guiness Book of World Records within the month for registration.

The Guiness 'people would then evaluate the entry and declare whether the Philippines had broken the record set by Mexico, Dayrit said.

The aerobics participants at the Rizal Park spilled over to the Museo Pambata near the US Embassy, causing heavy traffic on Taft Avenue yesterday.

The DOH set up at least 10 ministages where 43 instructors were assigned to lead the exercise.

In Cebu City, more than 20,000 people participated in the healthy lifestyle campaign. Health Undersecretary Nemecio Gako said the number exceeded their target of 10,000.

Dressed in color T-shirts printed with "Mag HL Ta" (Let's Have a Healthy Lifestyle), participants from the government and private sectors came as early as 5 a.m. for the fun walk dubbed "Lakad Puso" that ended at the Asia Town IT Park in Lahug. It was followed with a mass aerobic exercise.

A healthy lifestyle means no smoking, doing regular exercise, controlling one's weight, having a healthy diet, managing stress and having regular check-ups, according to Health Regional Director Rosario Benabaye. *Blanche S. Rivera in Manila and Jolene R. Bulambot PDI Visayas Bureau*

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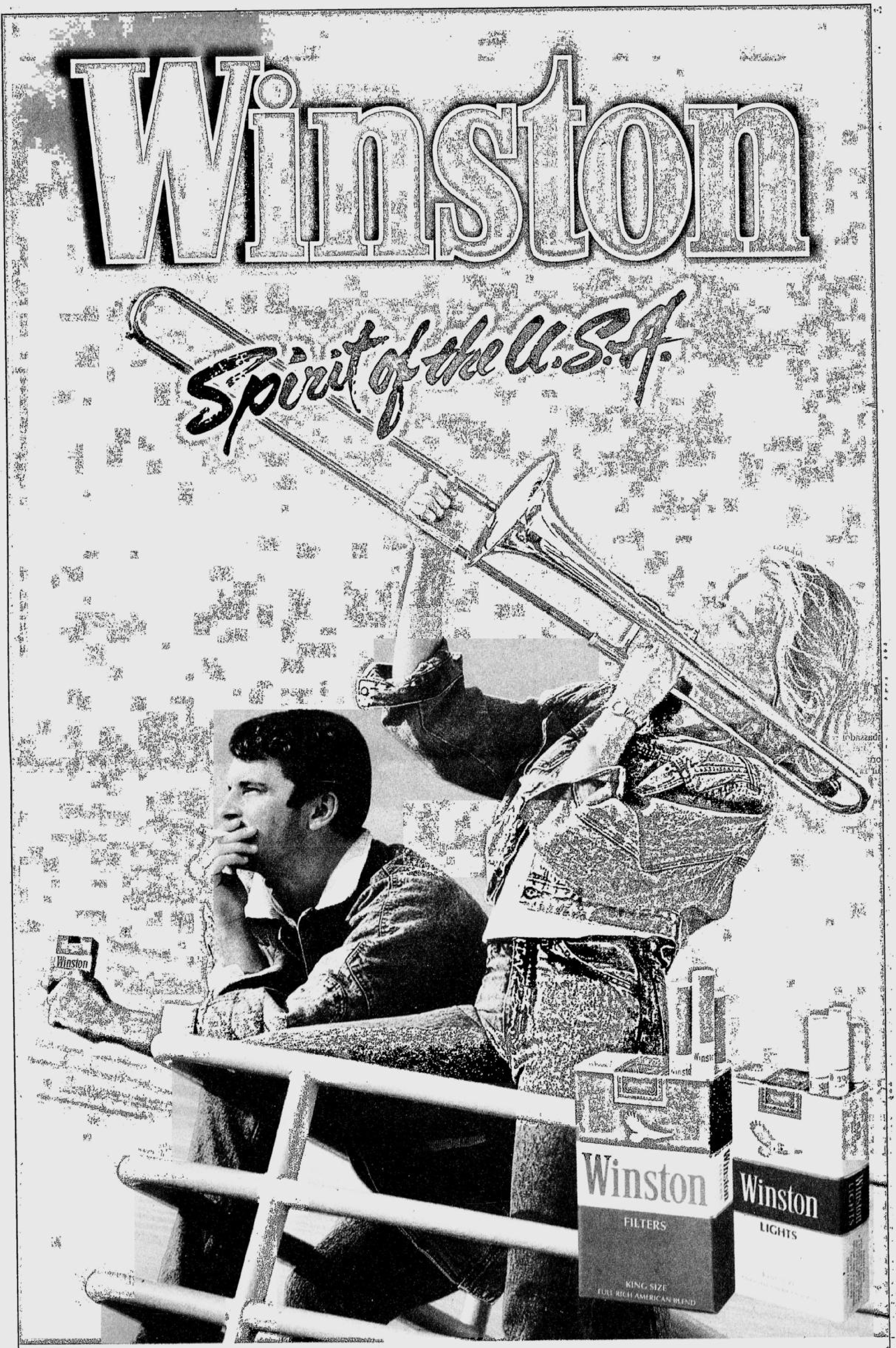
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SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Agassi reaches San Jose final

SAN JOSE, California—Top seed Andre Agassi tore apart fellow American James Blake 6-4, 6-1 to reach the $380,000 San Jose Open final for the third year running on Saturday. Agassi will face Davide Sanguinetti, who defeated unseeded American Justin Gimelstob 6-4, 6-7, 6-3 in the other semi. Australian Open champion Agassi was in devastating form from inside the baseline. *Reuters*

WOODS points and yells "fore" after he hit his second shot on the 18th fairway that landed in the stands during the third round of the Buick Invitational. AFP

BUICK TILT

Tiger roars ahead by 1

SAN DIEGO—With a dazzling array of shots and a diet of crucial pars on the back nine Saturday, Tiger Woods ended an entertaining at the Buick Invitational day by hitting into a corporate tent and still making birdie for a 4-under 68, giving him a one-stroke lead over Brad Faxon.

"I'm excited about even having a chance after taking off as much time as I did," said Woods, who was at 12-under 204.

In his first tournament since Dec. 12 surgery on his left knee, Woods didn't waste any time getting back into a familiar position. The next test is whether he can hold the lead, something he does better than anyone.

Woods is 26-2 on the PGA Tour when he has at least a share of the 54-hole lead, and the last one to beat him from behind was–guess who?–Phil Mickelson, in the 2000 Tour Championship at East Lake.

Mickelson, the hometown favorite and a chief rival to Woods, had a 69 by making a 15-foot birdie putt on the final hole, knowing what was on the line.

"I was thinking on that putt on 18, I would love to get into that last group," said Mickelson, who was two strokes behind at 206, along with Steven Alker.

The PGA Tour could not have scripted this any better.

Television ratings are 113 percent higher when Woods is in contention. Add to that a rivalry that got even more intense last week when Mickelson said in a magazine interview that Woods plays "inferior" equipment and is the only player good enough to overcome it.

They cleared the air Wednesday and saw each other briefly. Now, Woods and Mickelson get to spend the final 18 holes together at Torrey Pines.

There was no shortage of excitement on an overcast day along the Pacific Ocean, where large galleries were treated to great shots and late flops by a large cast of players on the South Course at Torrey Pines.

That Woods would emerge on top is somewhat surprising.

Then again, Mickelson spent five months away from the PGA Tour and won the Bob Hope Classic last year in his first tournament back.

Steven Alker joined Mickelson at 10-under 206, thanks to a lob wedge from 92 yards that spun back into the hole for eagle on No. 18. Fred Couples birdied the last two holes and was in a large group at 207.

Faxon could have taken some of the theater away. He was 13 under after a birdie on No. 10 and cruising along until three-putt bogeys on Nos. 11 and 13 stopped his momentum. He had to make a 3-foot par putt on the final hole for a 71.

That left him alone in second at 205–and the man in the middle of Tiger and Phil.

"Unbelievable, isn't it?" Faxon said of the Woods-Mickelson grouping. "This is the work of golfing gods. This will be like the 16th hole of Phoenix on every hole." *AP*

Els romps to 10-stroke victory in Perth

PERTH, Australia—Ernie Els completed a start-to-finish victory in a record 29 strokes under par at the Johnnie Walker Classic, finishing Sunday with a 6-under 66 to win his fourth tournament of the year by 10 strokes.

Els led by one stroke after the first round, four after the second and nine after Saturday's third round.

Two Australians–Stephen Leaney and Andre Stolz–were tied for second at 19-under 269 after final-round 66s. Five players, including defending champion Retief Goosen, were tied for fourth.

Els broke the European tour record in relation to par of 27-under 261 set by Jerry Anderson in 1984 at Ebel European Masters/Swiss Open.

Last month, Els shattered the U.S. PGA Tour record for relation to par, finishing 31 under in his eight-stroke victory in the season-opening Mercedes Championships in Hawaii.

On Saturday, Els' 23-under 193 total after three rounds on the Lake Karrinyup course broke the European tour's 54-hole record of 194 set by Argentina's Vicente Fernandez in the 1975 Benson & Hedges Festival.

The South African star shot 64s on Thursday and Saturday and 65 Friday.

The British Open champion spent last week in Bali after successfully defending his Heineken Classic title in Melbourne. He has four victories in his last five events and 10 since teaming with Retief Goosen to win the World Cup in November 2001. *AP*

FVR, Buhain gracing Interschool opening

BUHAIN

FORMER president Fidel Ramos, Korean Ambassador Son Sang Ho and Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain will lead key figures hitting the ceremonial balls during the Feb. 19 opening of the Samsung National Interscholastics at the Villamor Golf Club course.

Joining them are Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan, Philippine Air Force commanding general and chair of the Villamor Golf Council; Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, Inc, chair Richie Garcia, Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines president Gerry Handog and tournament host Sang Youl Eom, president and CEO of Samsung Electronics Philippines, Inc.

Officials of the 16 schools seeing action in the revival of the country's biggest inter-schools event which produced jungolf heroes and present crop of professional and amateur stars have also been asked by the organizing Professional Sports Management Group to attend the morning ceremonials.

There are already 124 players from various elementary, high school and college schools entered who will vie for the team and individual honors.

There are already a dozen teams in the grade school competition led by Poveda, La Salle Greenhills, Ateneo, Reedley IS, St. Benedict Alabang and Elizabeth Seton while the exciting high school fight will feature arch rivals' La Salle and Ateneo battling five other challengers.

Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing PSMG said that with a long summer shaping up for jungolfers and the mid-amateurs, the Interscholastics will give them the chance to start their preparations early.

Interested schools and individual entries may call the Professional Sports Management Group at 6711082 or cell 0917-8381874.

Baguio hosting Cup

ANOTHER major competition is in the offing at the scenic Camp John Hay Golf Club in Baguio City which will provide the perfect tournament setting for the 15th edition of the Annual Corporate Cup Golf Championship on March 4-7.

The Corporate Cup is an annual gathering of corporate bigwigs, business executives and even vacationing golfers from various countries competing in team format.

"For the last 15 years we've been able to set up a stage for a friendly competition among a wide range of golfers from handicap levels, to professionals and even nationalities," said tournament founder Cecil Hechanova.

The Corporate Cup organized by the Corporate Cup Golf Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. is backed by the Fil-Estate Group of Companies, the Camp John Hay Development Corp. and College Assurance Plan Phils.,Inc.,

There will be five divisions to be disputed, Groups I-IV and the seniors play with each team fielding five players with the best 4 counting for the day. Groupings will be determined by the average handicaps of the team members.

The entry fee is already inclusive of a free practice round on March 4, free giveaways and a chance to win attractive raffle prizes during the awards dinner. For inquiries, please call Mary Ann at tele-fax 842-4556.

NCA tourney resumes today

WITH the country's leading cocker-breeders competing, the NCA 7-Cock Derby resumes today (Monday) and Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the world-class Araneta Coliseum. It will be hosted by JV Magsaysay, Romy Panganiban and amang Magsaysay.

A year-round affair, the series is being organized by the premier National Cockers Association led by Big Dome owner Nene Araneta, Jun Santiago and Ito Ynares.

Also seing action are Danding Cojuangco, James Chiongbian, Peping Cojuangco and Esting Teopaco, Las Piñas Mayor Nene Aguilar, Rudy Albano, Dicky Lim, Eddie Araneta, prominent Bulacan businessman Nestor "Spider" Alcala, Fil-Americans Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman from San Francisco, California and Tos and Charlie Reyes.

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4. Raffle draw is on March 20, 2003 at the Canon Head Office in the presence of a DTI representative.
5. A customer can win only once.
6. Winners will be notified through registered mail as well as via telephone.
7. For provincial winners, to claim your prize, just send the following to Canon Marketing Philippines: Photocopy of a valid ID; Photocopy of the letter of notification; Photocopy of the original sales invoice; Photocopy of the winning stub. Upon verification, Canon Marketing Philippines will send the prize to the winner via door-to-door delivery or the prize may be personally claimed at the Canon Head Office.
8. For GMA winners, please present the following to Canon Marketing Philippines: Valid ID; Letter of notification; Original sales invoice and the winning stub.
9. Redemption Period shall be within 60 days from notification.
10. All employees of Canon Marketing Philippines, their dealers and suppliers, Dentsu Philippines and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
11. 20% prize tax shall be shouldered by the winner.
12. Prizes are not convertible to cash.

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Jordan turning 40, ready for new start

WASHINGTON—Michael Jordan celebrates his 40th birthday here Monday, spitting in the eye of Father Time by stepping onto the basketball court before a sellout crowd for a game that he made into a global phenomenon.

If the old adage about life beginning at 40 is true, Jordan will be ready for a new start when his Washington Wizards face Toronto, even though he is set to retire for the third and likely final time at the conclusion of the season.

"I just want to be remembered as a hell of a competitor that never gave up on anything, as a guy who truly loved the game and loved to take challenges, always against the odds," Jordan said.

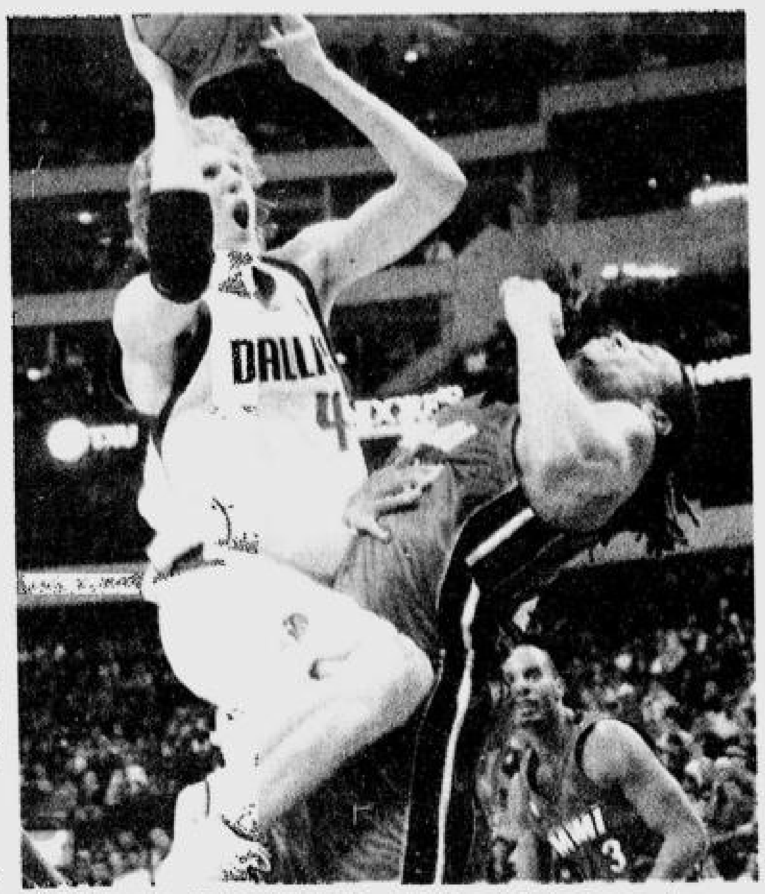
Rising to every test throughout a National Basketball Association career that began in 1984, Jordan guided the Chicago Bulls to six NBA crowns, won seven NBA scoring titles and was the NBA Most Valuable Player five times.

With skills that brought fans around the world to their feet and a smile that brought a king's ransom in endorsement riches, Jordan created a mystique that intimidates a new generation of NBA talent.

New Jersey guard Jason Kidd was going to congratulate the defiant superstar on yet another milestone when they met last week in the locker room at the NBA All-Star Game, but decided against testing Jordan's "Forty-'tude". "I was going to say, 'Happy 40th birthday', but I didn't want to piss him off," Kidd said. "His attitude as a player and a person has raised the bar for all of us." *AFP*

NBA results:

Chicago 88, Denver 69; Dallas 98, Miami 92; Portland 101, Seattle 96; Boston 92, LA Clippers 84.



DIRK Nowitzki of Dallas (left) collides with Miami's Brian Grant as he attempts a shot in the Mavericks' 98-92 win over the Heat Saturday night.

AP

PBA's parallel airing backed

By June Navarro

THE SIGNING of a franchise agreement between the Philippine Basketball Association and NBN-4 is among the agenda when the league's board of governors convene today.

And with the deal almost sealed as early as last week sans the signatures, the PBA and NBN-4 will move on and go about the television coverage of the games beginning this season.

PBA chair Jun Cabalan said he would push for a parallel broadcast between NBN-4 and its partner, IBC-13, on the airing of the games and endorse the concept to the PBA board.

``On our end, I don't see any downside on implementing a parallel broadcast. It's definitely an improvement from the simulcast NBN and IBC had initially offered," said Cabalan.

Parallel broadcast is a marketing strategy designed to reach out to a wider audience using the traditional coverage which caters to the masses on one side and an upscale telecast targeting the social class in the other.

Under the format, NBN-4 carries the accustomed coverage of the games while IBC-13 will be tasked to zero in on the AB classes and the younger generation of basketball fanatics.

An audio visual presentation shows the distinctiveness of parallel broadcast.

It promises to use the MTV format on its merchandising plugs to accelerate product awareness and enhance affinity with its target audience, a coverage identical to the success of the NBA.

International sports television networks ESPN and STAR TV are parallel broadcast carriers of the NBA.

``We're out to recapture lost market and go toe-to-toe with the giants in television,' said Mon Liboro, a top exec of I-Sports Action Television Inc, the group which developed parallel broadcast.

Liboro said parallel is out to connect and attract the younger generation, especially the adolescent viewers (13 to 19 years old), the age bracket where the PBA got the lowest television ratings in the past two years.

NBN general manager Joey Isabelo said parallel broadcast would happen within the year and stressed that its timing would depend on the influx of sponsors.

CARTER
15
MO GAME

mo jimmys
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
jimmys: a jump shot. example: that kid's jimmy is smooth.

mo dimes
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
dimes: an american coin with a value of ten pennies that in the context of basketball means an assist. example: did you see that pass? he dropped a dime.

mo cookies
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
cookies: used in reference to stealing a basketball. example: he stole his cookies!

mo shakes
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
shakes: the result of several basketball moves and fakes by a dribbling offensive player which has caused a defender to try to go into more than one direction at the same time.

mo boom
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
boom: a powerful, loud, and emphatic dunk shot. example: i boomed on you, man!

mo cleaning glass
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
cleaning glass: to rebound a basketball. originated due to the fact most backboards are made of plexiglas, and many players use big swiping motions to gather rebounds.

mo game
▷ mo: a slang term for /more/
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Victory at last for La Salle Iligan

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

NEVER-SAY-DIE La Salle Academy of Iligan has joined the list of Coke Go-for-Goal champions by nosing out NCR titlist Ateneo de Manila, 5-3, after a penalty shootout Thursday at the Silliman oval in Dumaguete City, giving Mindanao its first under-16 football crown in 19 years.

With the mesmeric victory, La Salle Iligan showed it is the team to keep an eye on in this annual soccerfest sponsored by Coca-Cola nationwide. A perennial title contender in the tournament having been in the finals for 14 times, La Salle Iligan did not lack oomph in winning this year's crown because, by and large, it did not succumb to the championship pressure.

"Next year is going to be interesting," said Bene Adad, Coke's marketing expert and incumbent president of the Philippine Football Federation, adding the tournament is fast becoming truly competitive. "We never had anything like this."

La Salle Iligan stamped its class, eking out the dramatic win before an enthusiastic crowd–the biggest crowd ever to watch a football match–despite the fact that football is one of the most underappreciated sports in the Philippines today. After a 1-1 tie at the end of regulation, La Salle's shinbusters outscored the Ateneo boys, 4-2, in the shootout behind the superb performance of Reginald Jukes, Felip Lagrosas, Jay Britner Actub and Michael Atienza, who also won the Most Valuable Player award.

RP archer snares 2 golds

BANGKOK—Newcomer Janina Bianca "Binky" Ortiz emerged as the Philippines' newest archery star Saturday by bagging the gold medal in the women's compound individual event in the first Asian Grand Prix here.

The 20-year-old Ortiz, a UP Diliman Psychology major who began competing only seven months ago, beat Singapore's Leong Yoke Sim in the finals to clinch her second gold in the three-day tourney which also lured archers from Malaysia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Bhutan, Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, Qatar, Laos Australia and China.

Ortiz won her first gold in the 70-meter event last Thursday.

Another compound bet, PSA awardee Raul Ramon Arambulo, and the RP men's recurve team of Christian Cubilla, Marvin Cordero and Arnold Rojas won a bronze medal each.

Arambulo took the men's compound individual event with a score of 107 points. He also set two RP records–659 in 70 meters, erasing Clint Sayo's 615, and 173 in the 18-arrow elimination, eclipsing Earl Yap's 166.

Arambulo's 173 also surpassed the 169 Asian mark of Singapore's Mark Seong set in Hong Kong in 2001.

San Beda tops NCR cage elims

SAN BEDA College banked on Claiford Arao and Yuri Escueta to subdue Philippine College of Criminology, 79-69, yesterday and emerge top qualifier in the NCR eliminations for the National Inter-Secondary Basketball Championship at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The 6-foot-5 Arao fired 24 points and ruled both boards while the 5-9 Escueta added 16 points and orchestrated the plays as the Red Cubs again advanced to the national finals slated Feb. 24-March 2 in Legaspi, Albay.

PCCr held off San Beda, 59-55, early in the fourth quarter, but finally wilted when the Red Cubs dropped an 18-point bomb sparked by Marvin Braganza's triple and sustained by Arao and Escueta's inside forays.

Despite the loss, PCCr also qualified with third placer La Salle Greenhills, which was invited by organizers led by Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara to join the NCR finalists.

San Beda is raring to get back at University of Visayas, which beat it in last year's edition in Roxas City.

Basketball Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim and technical committee members Ferdinand Pascual and Ariel Bermeo awarded the trophies to the winners after the tournament supported by YKL Color Films, Spring Cooking Oil, Cebuana Lhuillier, Absolute Distilled Water, Healthy Options and Bakers' Fair.

Roy Luarca

Cusa gains semis

STA. Lucia Realty-Cusa banked on Robert Toletino, Anthony Sonza and Carlos Cecilia to trip Coca-Cola-National Pool C, 73-67, Saturday and claim the second outright semifinal slot in the Bert Lina Six-Foot and Above Junior Cup at the Lyceum Gym. It was the third win in five outings for the Cusa selection, which joined the unbeaten Talk N Text-National Pool A in the semis. Talk N Text whipped Red Bull-National Pool B, 88-72, for its fifth straight win.

Alinghi leads, 2-0, in America's Cup

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Alinghi swooped past Team New Zealand in the shadow of the finish line to win the second race of the America's Cup match by seven seconds Sunday and lead the-best-of nine series 2-0.

Defender New Zealand seemed to have the race in safekeeping when, after trailing early, it passed Alinghi on the first downwind leg and led by up to 34 seconds at the next four marks.

AP

Counter Strike demo

A NEW self-defense system for adults will be demonstrated tomorrow at the YMCA Makati.

Called Counter Strike, the self-defense teaches adults to survive armed or unarmed attack in just three seconds.

Unlike conventional martial arts like taekwondo, karatedo, muay thai and others, Counter Strike prepares students to gain the upper hand in the actual circumstances and environment of an attack.

The demo starts at 6 p.m. in preparation for the opening of formal classes on March 8 at the YMCA gym.

French national John Havan, founder and chief instructor of Counter Strike, holds a 3rd Dan in judo (Kodokan, Japan), 3rd Dan in taekwondo (International Taekwondo Federation, Korea), 2nd Dan in aikido (Hombu Dojo, Japan) and has lectured on martial arts in Europe and Asia.

Call YMCA Makati at 8996380 to 82 for details.

TOUR PROMOTER

Airfreight 2100 president Lito Alvarez (center) signs the contract giving Direct Image Dimensions the advertising and promotions rights for the Tour Pilipinas 2003 which gets going this summer. Also sealing the pact are Tour Pilipinas executive director Mar Mendoza (second from right) and consultant Cornelio Padilla Jr. (extreme right) and Direct Image VP Jorge Pena.

Davao 7-cock tilt unfolds March 3

THUNDERBIRD Power Feeds and Univet Agricultural Products, the country's leader in gamefowl health and nutrition, will play a major role in this year's "Araw ng Dabaw" celebration with all-out sponsorship of four big derbies set at the premier southern city.

Through the initiative of Thunderbird Gamefowl Specialists for Davao, Dr. Sally Jonson, product launchings, motorcades, cocking seminars and other promotional activities will be conducted within the period.

The action starts with a 7-Cock Derby on March 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 at the Davao Mattina Gallera hosted by the new management of Pepe Tan, Bebeot Uy and Co.

Derby registry opens

ENTRIES to the "5th Ucap Firebird Anito 7-Cock Derby", must be submitted today from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Mandaluyong Coliseum. The derby sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo and Washout Shampoo from Lakpue Drug Inc.

The event is set tomorrow and on Thursday (Feb. 18 and 20).

"We are expecting up to 40 entries," said the hosts, hotelier-sportsman Biboy Enriquez and Mauro Prieto, who are both active members of the United Cockers Association of the Philippines (Ucap) and Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA).

Meanwhile, the "6th Ucap LCC 7-Cock Derby" will be hosted by Louie Cua next week, Feb. 25 and 27.

For details, contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-41110 and 535-2341.

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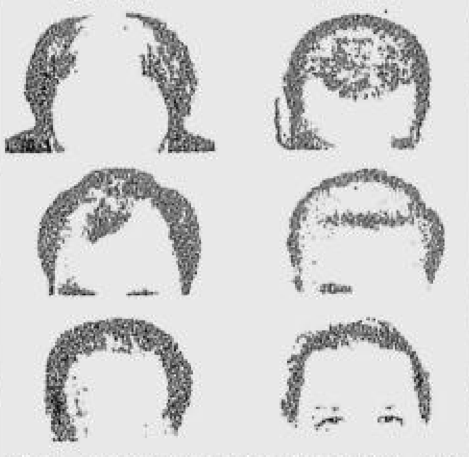

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Tondo tanod shot dead

TONDO *barangay tanod* Rex Aman Tolino, 32, died a brutal death near a mosque in Port Area, Manila before dawn yesterday. Tolino, of Block 8, Baseco Compound, Port Area, Manila, was killed after an unidentified assailant shot him twice. ***Philip Tubeza***

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor **Louie C. Camino**

FBI keeps eye on Strunk

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE FEDERAL Bureau of Investigation is monitoring the movements of Roger Lauren Strunk, principal accused in the murder of Nida Blanca, a National Bureau of Investigation official bared yesterday.

The NBI official, who requested anonymity, said the impending extradition of Roger Lauren Strunk will test if the United States would extradite one of its citizens wanted for a capital offense.

The official noted that Strunk faces the death penalty if he is extradited back to the country and is proven guilty. Murder is a capital offense.

"We'll see if they will do what we did to (Manila Rep.) Mark Jimenez. Will they give up their own citizen?" the official asked.

In Jimenez's case, the NBI had to cross swords with some congressmen who wanted him to get some special treatment.

But lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI Interpol chief, said American authorities are closely coordinating with the NBI and is even monitoring Strunk's activities.

"We know his (Strunk's) location. The FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) is monitoring his movements," Diaz said on Friday.

He said that Strunk is in "his usual place in California."

The Department of Justice last week decided to file murder charges against Strunk and Philip Medel Jr. before the Pasig Regional Trial Court for Blanca's killing.

Diaz said that it usually takes a week for the court to review and decide whether there is probable cause for the case to proceed or if there should be a re-investigation.

STRUNK

Diaz said he is confident the court would side with the DOJ and issue an arrest warrant against Strunk.

Once a warrant has been issued, the Philippines can formally ask the US to extradite Strunk back to the country.

On Saturday, Strunk's lawyers vowed to use "all legal avenues" to block the trial of Blanca's former husband.

Defiant bus owners ask for compassion

By Christian V. Esguerra and Agnes Donato

TOUGH-TALKING bus operators yesterday turned sober and appealed for "human compassion" in a last-ditch effort to convince Bayani Fernando not to include them in this week's traffic coding scheme.

"For once, please don't play God and have compassion," Claire dela Fuente, Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association president, said of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair.

"We're not guinea pigs that you could easily experiment on anytime you want. Drivers, in particular, are human beings engaged in decent livelihood."

To avoid an imminent clash with traffic enforcers, she said bus drivers "illegally" plying Metro Manila routes today have been instructed to accept violation tickets and compile them for an upcoming lawsuit.

Dela Fuente said a legal case was their only recourse in the face of Fernando's "unilateral resolve to strip them of their means of livelihood."

"The most that he should have done was to consult us before he came up with that decision," she said. "It's very wrong to implement policies in a rush while playing deaf to legitimate concerns."

Dela Fuente has also written President Macapagal-Arroyo to seek assistance in their protest against the MMDA.

She told the President that the implementation of the new Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) starting today was "untimely, as we are now threading on thin ice considering the poor economics we are suffering."

Dela Fuente explained that bus operators foresee a 20 to 30-percent reduction in their present income once the number-coding for buses takes effect.

Heavily criticized for suspending the UVVRP, Fernando re-imposed the scheme covering only public vehicles from Monday until Friday. Private vehicles will be exempted.

But he triggered even louder uproar among bus operators and drivers when he included them in the coding scheme that originally covered mainly private vehicles.

Vehicles, including buses whose plate numbers end in either 1 or 2, are banned from the streets today.

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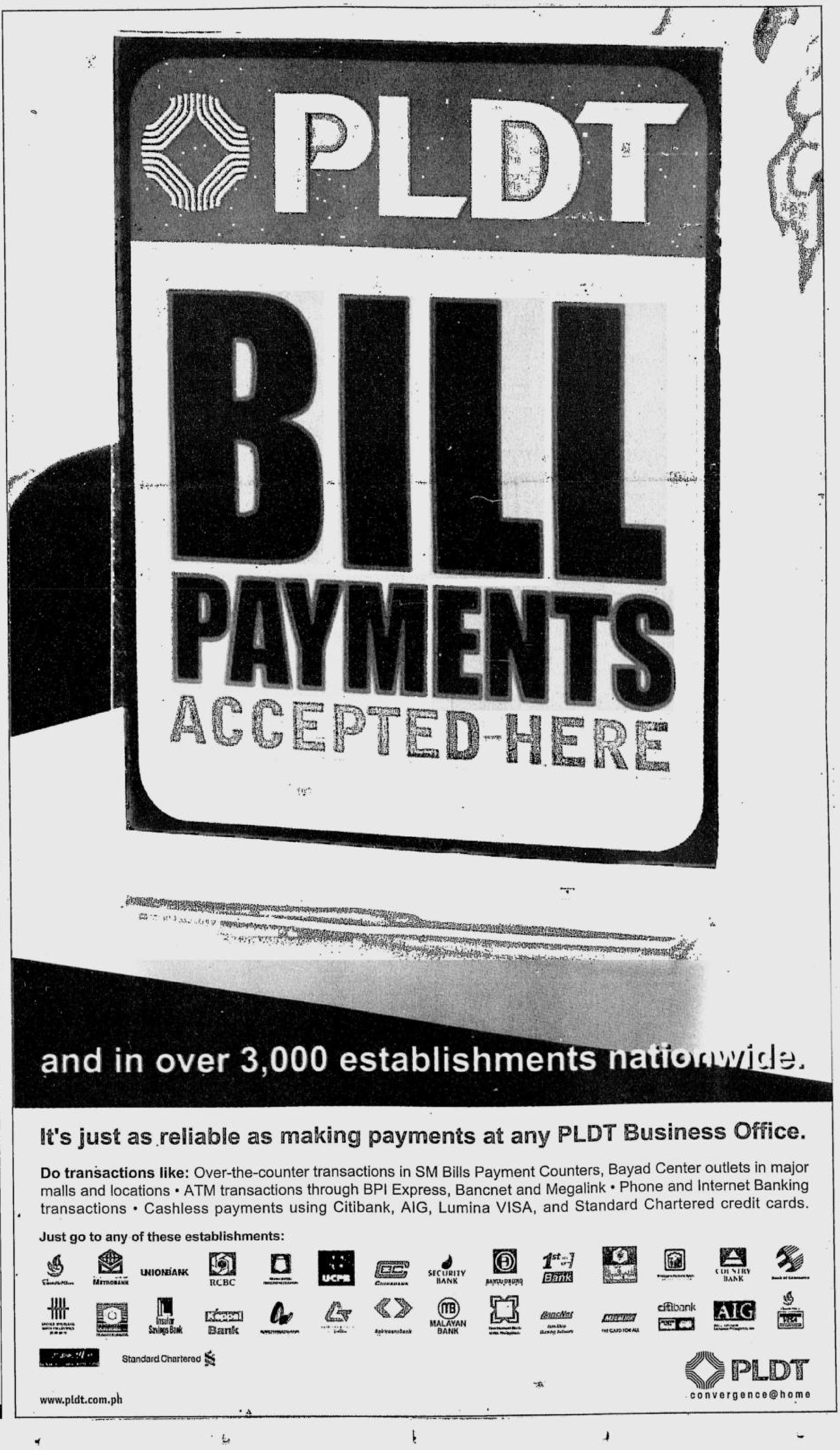

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Dacer slay hunt intensified

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE have launched a fresh manhunt for the five fugitive police officers and a civilian charged with the kidnap-slay of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in November 2000.

The suspects—Chief Insp. Vicente Arnado, senior police officer 4 Benjamin Taladu and senior police officers 1 Mario Sarmiento, Rolando Lacasandile and William Reed, and civilian Margarito Cuenco—are believed to be hiding in Mindanao.

Chief Supt. Eduardo Matillano, director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group which has taken over the case from the National Bureau of Investigation, has dispatched several teams to track down the elusive suspects.

"I directed all regional offices in Cebu, Davao and Cotabato to look for them, and serve the warrant of arrest," he said in an interview, adding that the CIDG's Detective and Special Operations Division was involved in the manhunt.

Matillano added that he would also request the Bureau of Immigration, through the justice department, to place the six on its hold departure order list if they were not on the list yet.

"With GOD All Things Are Possible!"

DACER'S office at the Manila Hotel ERIK ARAZAS

"We are exerting all efforts to have them arrested," he said.

The fresh manhunt came on the heels of NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco's announcement that he has asked the US authorities to deport Senior Superintendents Michael Ray Aquino and Cesar Mancao to face trial for the case.

The pair, former members of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, fled to the United States in July 2001 for fear that they would be questioned on the case. They, according to the NBI, had been charged with the crime.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the transfer of the case from the NBI to the CIDG following last month's killing of Supt. Teofilo Vina, who also figured in the Dacer-Corbito double murder case but was never charged.

Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., PNP chief, had justified the transfer, citing that the police have more "holdings" (persons arrested) than the NBI.

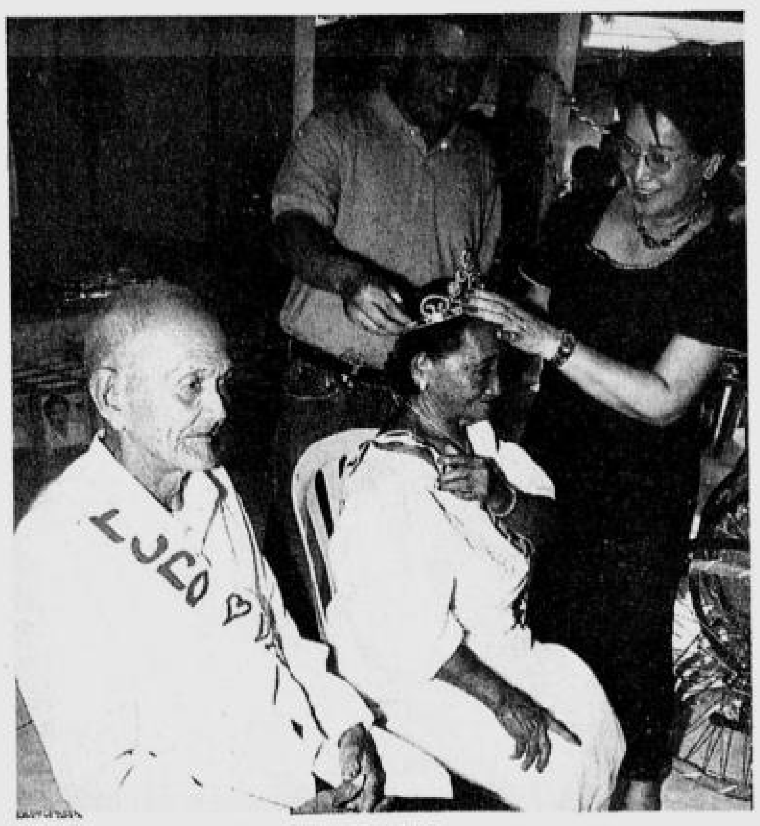
Dacer and Corbito were abducted while cruising near the intersection of Zobel Roxas Street and President Osmeña Highway in Manila on Nov. 24, 2000. They were brought to Cavite, where they were strangled to death, burned and buried.

Arnado, together with Supt. Glen Dumlao, conducted "tactical interrogation" on Dacer inside a van parked at the back of a bank in Dasmariñas, Cavite, but failed to extract any information, police records showed.

Taladua, Reed and Lacasandile, on the other hand, were on board one of the three vehicles that were used in the abduction phase. Sarmiento and Cuenco were later implicated in the crime by witnesses.

Police said that the whole operation was "compartmentalized," pointing out that the abduction, tactical interrogation and execution of Dacer and Corbito were carried out by different teams.

At least 21 police officers and civilians were charged with the twin killings, including 15 who were arrested.



KING AND QUEEN OF HEARTS
SEN. Tessie Oreta crowns the Lolo Valentino and Lola Valentina at the Golden Acres Home for the aged in Quezon City during a Valentine's program. JOE ARAZAS

Barangay chief's brod at large after killing

By Tina Santos

A 45-YEAR-OLD welder was killed and his nephew seriously wounded after a neighborhood toughie, said to be the brother of a barangay captain, barged into the victims' house armed with a high-powered handgun Friday night in Malabon City.

Edwin Pelagio, was instantly killed inside his house on T. Santosa Street, Barangay Baritan, Malabon, while his nephew Jimmy, 22, sustained a bullet wound in the leg.

It was learned that because of Federico Roque's ties with the authority, even Malabon City police chief Supt. Pedro Ramos was dispatched to arrest the suspect. However, Roque, said to be the brother of Barangay Baritan chair Alex Roque managed to elude arrest and has remained in hiding.

PO1 Damaso Gayatao of the Malabon Police Investigation Unit said the killing was triggered by a petty bicycle mishap, in which the victim accidentally sideswiped the suspect the afternoon before the shooting.

This apparently drove Roque to storm the Pelagio residence armed with a super .38-cal. pistol at around 9:45 p.m., catching Edwin and Jimmy off guard, police said.

Edwin immediately jumped on Roque and struggled for the gun, which then went off and hit the victim in the left shoulder. The bullet pierced all the way through the torso of the victim, exiting the lower right side of his body.

UP students, lawyer hurt in brawl

A LAWYER and six University of the Philippines students were injured after they figured in a brawl in a bar in Quezon City early yesterday morning.

Police said lawyer Jude Sodario, of Wack-Wack Road, Mandaluyong City, and his four companions had a quarrel with two fraternity members from UP Diliman inside the Salo Bar and Restaurant on Timog Avenue, QC at about 12:30 a.m. Sunday. *Agnes Donato*

?NO TO WAR YES TO PEACE!
Nó to WAR!
MAG HL TAYO

HEALTHY CALL FOR PEACE
Participants in the Mass Aerobics Program Healthy Living Exercise at the Quirino Grandstand take time out to pitch in for the worldwide call for peace. They unfurl a banner rejecting US plans to use force against Iraq. The activity was an undertaking of the Department of Health. ERIK ARAZAS

Mario Ordoñez, 87

MARIO Ordoñez, father of nationalist writer and PUP professor Rogelio Ordoñez, passed away on Friday. He was 87.

Ordoñez lies in state at the family residence in Alapan 1-A, Imus, Cavite.

He will be laid to rest at the Imus Cemetery tomorrow afternoon.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 17, 2003
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 4:1-15, 25
Gospel: Mk 8:11-13

The Pharisees came and started to argue with Jesus. Hoping to embarrass him, they asked for some heavenly sign. Then his spirit was moved. He gave a deep sigh and said, "Why do the people of this present time ask for a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this people." Then he left them, got into the boat again and went to the other side of the lake.

Commentary

We read in the Gospels of the many signs and wonders Jesus worked, which certainly would be sufficient proof that He was from God. But for the Pharisees, these signs are unsatisfactory. Still they were looking for something more—a heavenly sign perhaps. However, Jesus says no more signs will be given. He has given many of them, but because their hearts are closed they cannot see. Faith requires an openness, a willingness to accept ordinary reasons for believing.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (ANTI GRAFT AND CORRUPT PRACTICES ACT)—**Gross inexcusable negligence**—Gross inexcusable negligence does not signify mere omission of duties nor plainly the exercise of less than the standard degree of prudence. Rather, it refers to negligence characterized by the want of even the slightest care, acting or omitting to act in a situation where there is a duty to act, not inadvertently but willfully and intentionally, with conscious indifference to consequences insofar as other persons may be affected. It entails the omission of care that even inattentive and thoughtless men never fail to take on their own property, and in cases involving public officials it takes place only when breach of duty is flagrant and devious. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Bellosillo, Second Division, Sistoza v. Desierto, G.R. No. 144784. September 3, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Militants denounce oil 'opportunists'

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CALAMBA CITY—The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Southern Tagalog branded the Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation and other oil companies in the country as "opportunists" in the light of a new round of petroleum price increases.

"The three oil cartel—Shell, Caltex and Petron—in the country are using the pending US attack on Iraq as an excuse to increase petroleum products," Edwin Alog, Bayan-ST deputy secretary general, told the INQUIRER.

In protest of the petroleum price increases, Bayan and different leftist groups led an afternoon march and noise barrage at Calamba City junction attended by tricycle drivers, jeepney operators, workers, vendors and students.

Shell raised the prices of its gasoline, diesel and kerosene products by 50 centavos per liter effective 10 p.m., Saturday.

The price increases were Shell's fourth in six weeks.

Petron, Eastern Petroleum and Unioil Philippines Petroleum all declared they would similarly increase the prices of their oil products effective today.

Alog warned the public that the prices of the purchased power adjustment (PPA), other electric and water bills, and most basic commodities would increase as a result of the recent oil price hikes.

"We now see the negative effects to the consumers of deregulating oil industry," Alog added.

The militant groups called for the re-regulation and nationalization of the oil industry in the country.

A reader's different view

THIS rejoinder to our previous column on the NBA All-Star classic was bumped off last Friday due to space constraints:

Dear Mr. Trinidad,

Relative to your column on Wednesday, I wish to express a different view on the last NBA All-Star Game and MJ.

Reaction of the media may be entirely different if the situation was the other way around. East was West and West was East, and MJ was in the shoes of Kobe. Referee Ted Bernhardt must be or was correct in calling the foul. After all, the referee was in the best position to call the game. Obviously, many in the media want a Jordan Moment.

CBBSI.com reported: "In fairness to the veteran NBA official, there was no dispute about the call."

If this is accurate, the question one may ask is: As spectators, do we want the referees to call the game as they see it? After all, they were trained to do just that. No need for referees to be biased.

Recognized as the greatest basketball player ever, MJ may be embarrassed by media blaming the referee for spoiling his celebration. With all the awards and achievements of MJ, he has done more than enough for basketball and sports in general. The tribute he received on the All-Star Game was just fitting for this great athlete.

Can we not let the referees do their job?

Reprints of CNNSI. com reports come with my comments.

ERNESTO C. IGNACIO
Malabon City

***

Here are some of those comments:

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

Even Bryant could not believe he made the call

Isiah Thomas smacked his forehead.

Antoine Walker rolled his eyes.

Vince Carter shook his head in disbelief.

To hear them tell it, referee Ted Bernhardt did more than muck up Jordan's final All-Star appearance. He took a Sharpie to the Mona Lisa.

"It was MJ's night," an incredulous Jermaine O'Neal said as he pulled a skull cap over his head—perhaps to hide a new set of goat's horns—at his locker stall. "A Hail Mary fadeaway to win the game? It doesn't get any better than that."

Now it's just going to be Bernhardt—and O'Neal—who go down in All-Star infamy.

In fairness to the veteran NBA official, there was no dispute about the call.

O'Neal basically knocked Bryant to the floor as the Lakers superstar was trying to squeeze off a desperation 3-pointer. Had it been an ordinary game, there would have been little fuss.

But if ever circumstances made it acceptable for a zebra to swallow his whistle, this would have been it.

An All-Star Game. Jordan's final show. Twenty thousand fans who have to work the next morning facing the prospect of Atlanta's massive traffic jams.

The fact that MJ had failed to deliver on an earlier chance to win the game at the end of regulation only made it more delicious.

But in yet another controversy for David Stern's beleaguered officials this season, Bernhardt played Scrooge and put his rule book over his story book.

When the whistle blew, Jordan and his teammates reacted as if they had just witnessed a Brink's heist. Towels flew in the air above the Eastern bench. Eyes rolled.

Thomas, standing on the sideline, smacked his head and exclaimed with mock anguish, "Leave it to a referee to—it up!"

O'Neal actually got plenty of support from his Eastern teammates. Jordan, he said, laughed it off. The rest of the team expressed dismay.

Even Bryant came up and said he couldn't believe the ref made the call. At least that's what O'Neal said.

The truth, of course, is that O'Neal never should have been in the same area code as Bryant on the final play. It was an All-Star Game, after all. Nobody plays defense in an All-Star Game. But O'Neal apparently didn't get the memo.

As a result, Michael Jordan didn't get another memorable finish.

Ang ganda-ganda niya! Darna!

City Hall hit for hiding the trees 'and the truth'

By Jerome Aning

MEMBERS of the foundation that developed the Arroceros Forest Park in Manila are desperate about not being able to tend to the trees which they planted 10 years ago.

"We are worried about the trees with all the human activity going on inside; we feel so bad because we don't know what's happening to them," Winner Foundation president Regina Roces-Paterno said over the phone.

The park was closed to the public two weeks ago after it was taken over by City Hall, which is planning to construct a teachers center in one portion and transform the rest into a botanical garden.

Mayor Lito Atienza closed the 2.1-hectare park to the public after taking over it two weeks ago. He said it would remain closed until the teachers center and the botanical garden are set up inside the property.

But Paterno said Atienza closed the park because "he doesn't want people to see the natural beauty of the park which Winner worked for so long."

She urged the public to demand that they be allowed into the park and see for themselves its "destruction" and transformation into concrete.

Members of Winner wanted to keep the property until its development is finished in 2013. But last Thursday, they failed to convince a city court to allow them to do so.

Paterno also said the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) has initiated construction of a riverbank boardwalk, a portion of which touches the forest park.

Trenches and canals, she recounted, have been constructed and could harm the trees' roots.

Worse, she added, the workers and the trucks entering the place and the noise they create are beginning to scare the birds and disturb tiny creatures that have made the forest park their home.

Paterno explained that, according to law, the boardwalk should only consume up to 10 meters from the bank.

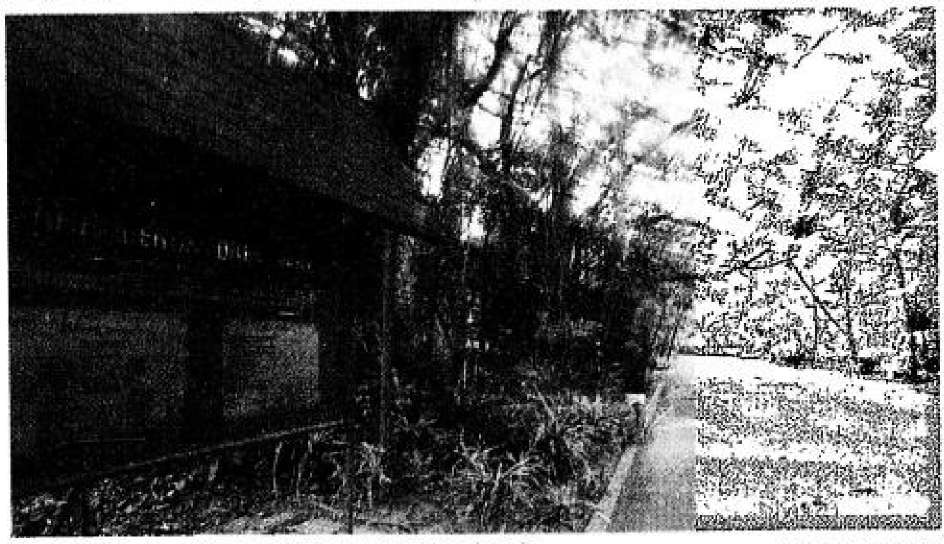
But there are points where the walkway's boundaries park exceeded and reached 17 meters from the riverbank, she added.

The Winner president said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has estimated that 100 to 150 trees will be affected by the boardwalk construction.

The PRRC, she deplored, did not coordinate with the Winner Foundation before initiating their activities.

She said she is suspicious because the implementing arm of the PRRC in the boardwalk project is the local government. Also, Mayor Lito Atienza co-chairs the commission.

"We should have been advised, but we were disregarded, even if the case in court has yet to be finally resolved," she told the INQUIRER.


THE NOW closed to public Arroceros forest park.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

PRESIDENTIAL daughter Luli Macapagal-Arroyo joined by Pro-Life Philippines president and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Mrs. Evelina Atienza in a ward for the Home for the Angels.

'Home for Angels is gift from God'

By Jerome Aning

RENEWING their commitment to give unwanted and abandoned babies the gift of life and a change for a bright future, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and his wife Evelina marked on Friday the seventh anniversary of the adoption house for abandoned infants in San Andres.

The city's first couple was joined by presidential daughter Luli Arroyo as guest honor during anniversary rites at the Home for the Angels on Coral Street

The Home for the Angels is a crisis center for unwanted and abandoned babies set up by the Atienzas as part of their pro-life advocacy.

The center was originally housed in a small apartment on Leon Guinto Street, Paco, which was inaugurated on Feb. 14, 1996.

The couple started with seven abandoned babies as the center's first wards. Since then, the home- has been able to save 150 infants with 133 put up for adoption and now living normal and happy lives with their foster parents.

The mayor is the president of Pro-Life Philippines and is a vigorous pro-life advocate.

He recounted that he and his wife were often confronted with the question of what to do with a child whenever they would try to convince women with unwanted pregnancies not to have the child aborted.

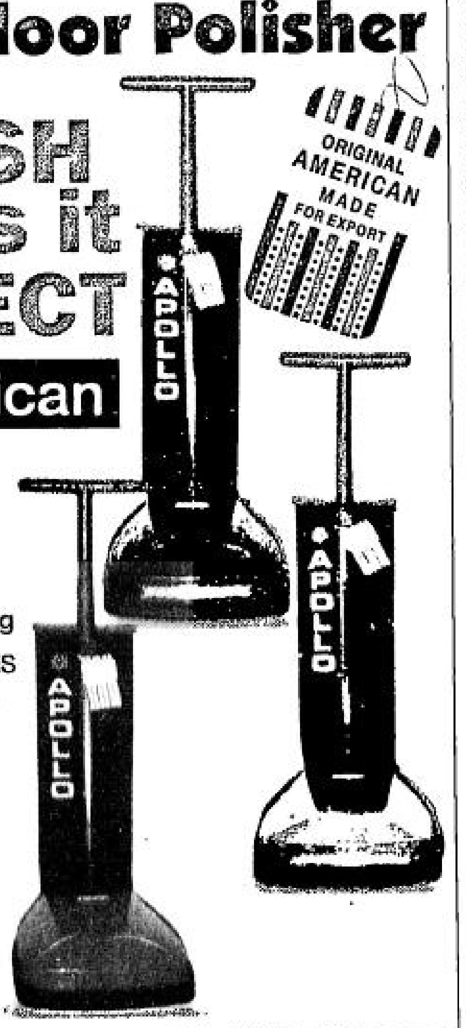
"We prayed hard for discernment and this (adoption house) was God's answer to our prayers," Atienza explained.

He said they experienced "a scary moment" during a huge prayer rally of the El Shaddai in 1996. That was when Bro. Mike Velarde anounced to the 200,000 rally participants that the Atienzas are taking care of abandoned and unwanted babies.

"We didn't even know where we would get the resources to put up the centers," he said.

But they were able to open and maintain the center with the support of friends and kind-hearted strangers who shared their love and compassion for abandoned babies.

As an example, the Atienza couple even adopted two special children to add to their already large brood of six kids.



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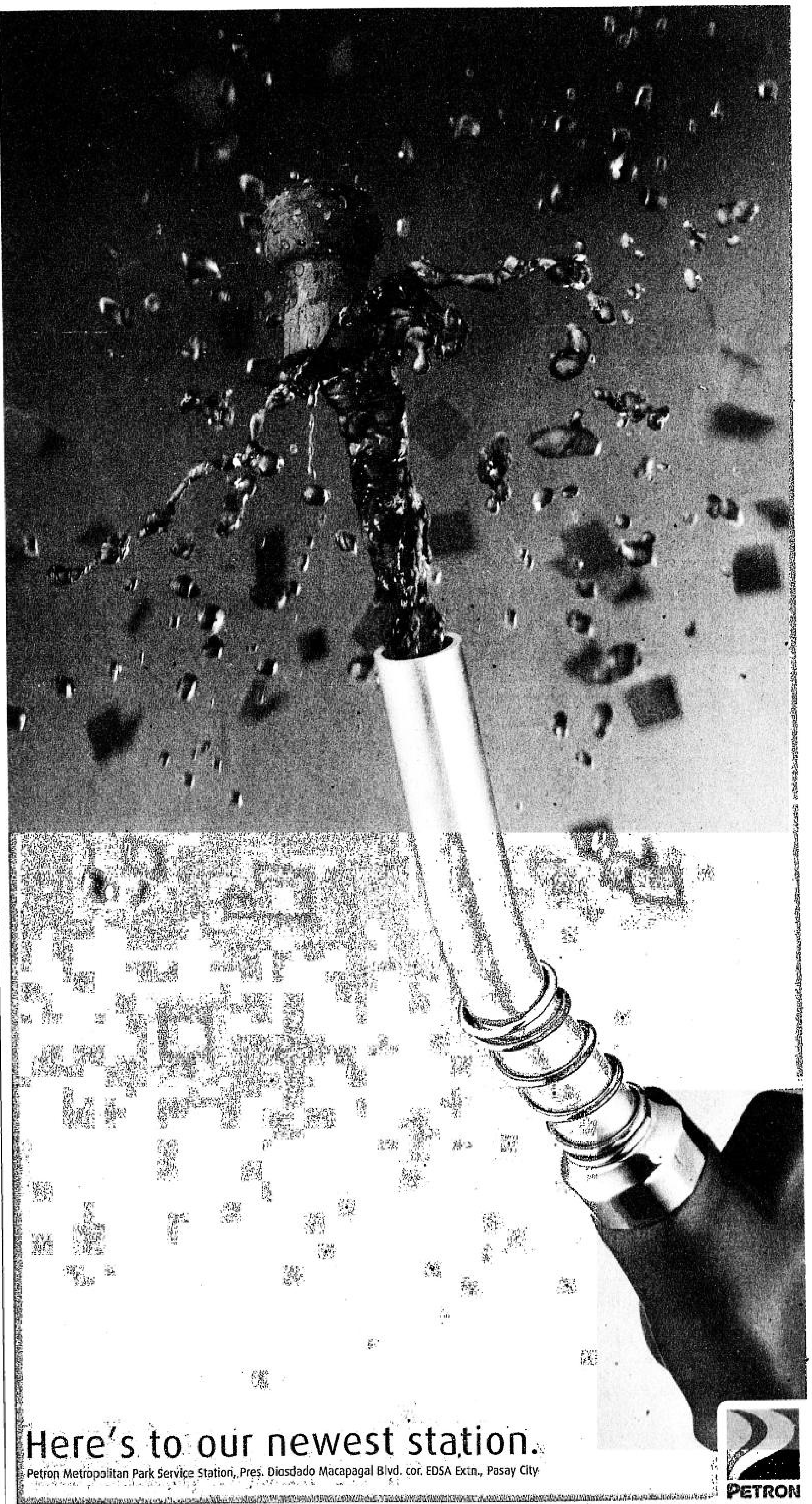

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4	AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM CITY DAVAO

2976998

1	I SPY
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	REPLI-KATE
6	THEY

SM BICUTAN

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1	MAGNIFICO
2	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
3	MAID IN MANHATTAN
4	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

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1	I SPY
2	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
3	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 11:00 MF/11:20/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/ 10:35 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END

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2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	WHITE OLANDER
4	THEY
5	AB NORMAL
6	HERO
7	I SPY
8	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
9	THE EYE
10	MAGNIFICO

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1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	THEY
3	HERO
4	THE EYE
5	AB NORMAL
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	WHITE OLANDER

Metro East - Marcos hway

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1	THEY
2	WHITE OLANDER
3	MAGNIFICO
4	I SPY
5	HERO
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	AB NORMAL
8	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Novaliches

935- 3229 - 30

1	HERO
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	THEY
4	MAGNIFICO
5	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
6	AB NORMAL
7	I SPY
8	WHITE OLANDER

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2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	THEY
4	AB NORMAL
5	MAGNIFICO
6	I SPY

Imus

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2	HERO
3	AB NORMAL
4	WHITE OLANDER
5	THEY
6	MAGNIFICO

Sta. Rosa Laguna

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1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2	MAGNIFICO
3	BALATSIBUYAS
4	THEY
5	AB NORMAL

Bacolod

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1	I SPY
2	HOT CHICK
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	THEY
5	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	SUKDULAN

Iloilo

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1	I SPY
2	AB NORMAL
3	8 MILE
4	TRY SEVENTEEN
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO
6	LORD OF THE RINGS 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Prisons lawyer hits Macala over relief

WPD traps three traffic volunteers

By Alcuin Papa

THREE Manila traffic volunteers were arrested Saturday by police for extorting money from drivers in Sampaloc, Manila.

Elements of the Western Police District Intelligence Unit arrested suspects Edgar Labian, 39, of Hermosa Street, Tondo; Jose Yanes, 32, of 2124 Batangas St. Tondo; and Rafael Reyes, 39, of 314 Building 6, Quirino Avenue, Paco, Manila.

The three were arrested during an entrapment operation at the corner of Arsenio Lacson and Mendoza Streets in Sampaloc, Manila at 11 a.m.

Before the arrest, the WPD Intelligence Unit had received complaint from drivers of passenger jeepneys in the area that the three were frequently extorting money from them.

During the entrapment operation, a Manila policeman posed as a driver and intentionally beat a red light at the corner.

The policeman was immediately flagged down by the three volunteers. Labian then told the undercover policeman that he would ignore the violation in exchange for P200.

When the policeman handed over the marked money, the two other traffic enforcers approached the policeman.

At this point, other elements of the WPD intelligence unit closed in and immediately arrested the three suspects.

The three were detained at the WPD headquarters on UN Avenue and were charged with extortion.

Dante LIBAN RESIGN
OPA
ALIS DYAN ISAMA MO MGA TUTA MO

LIBAN RESIGN Tesda workers hold a rally at the Tesda complex Feb. 13 to demand the ouster of their boss Dante V. Liban.

By Christian V. Esguerra

WAS HE a coddler of a suspected criminal? Or the object of insecurity of the director of the Bureau of Corrections?

Lawyer Angelito Moreno yesterday cried foul over the decision of prisons director Ricardo Macala to relieve him as New Bilibid Prison's chief legal counsel for allegedly protecting influential inmate Rey Yap, former mayor of a Misamis Occidental town.

Moreno said he believed that his relief had nothing to do with the case of the former mayor jailed and convicted for the killing of his political rival Victorio Cebedo.

"(The Yap case) was merely used as an excuse to kick me out. The truth is, Macala thought I was after his position."

Moreno recalled how it happened: In January, he sought the recommendation of Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser for Mindanao, for his application as NBP superintendent.

Dureza agreed, but Moreno said the presidential adviser erroneously recommended him to the position of Bureau of Corrections director, the post being occupied by Macala.

When he learned of Dureza's recommendation, Macala naturally turned red. It didn't help that Moreno had profusely apologized for the mishap.

Said Moreno: "In an angry manner, (Macala) told me: 'Let's not fool each other anymore. I'm still here yet you're already going after my position.'"

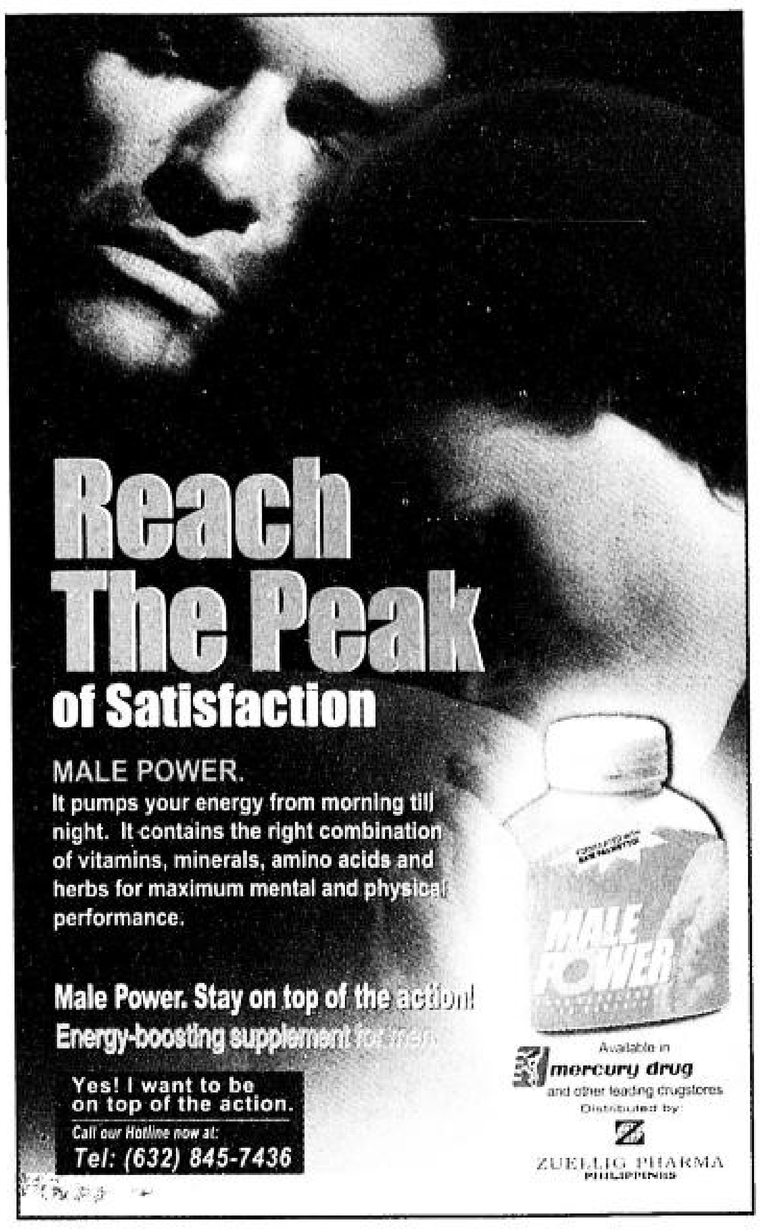
Macala said last week that Moreno's alleged application as Bucor chief was among the reasons for his relief. On top of this, the lawyer was also being investigated for purportedly violating prison policies, he added.

Moreno was transferred to a low-key position as legal counsel of the NBP superintendent after he recommended that Yap and convicted drug trafficker Peter Co be moved out of "bartolina" or disciplinary cell.

The recommendation was later turned down by Macala who hauled off the two inmates to Building 14 after allegedly yielding fake money and prohibited communications equipment inside their cells at the maximum security compound.

Co was transferred last Friday to his original cell while Yap, having been reprimanded for a similar offense, remained at the disciplinary cell, according to Moreno.

"Was Co transferred because of my recommendation which Macala had rejected or was it based on some unknown reasons?" Moreno asked.



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Malonzo blames barangay officials

CALOOCAN City Mayor Rey Malonzo has turned his ire on barangay chairs over the city's worsening garbage problem.

Malonzo said the barangay leaders were the ones who should be blamed if indeed there was a garbage problem in the city.

"Everyday, I passed by places that were allegedly filled with garbage. But I found out these were clean of garbage," Malonzo said in an interview over dzMM.

He said the barangay leaders have not been effectively implementing the waste segregation scheme.

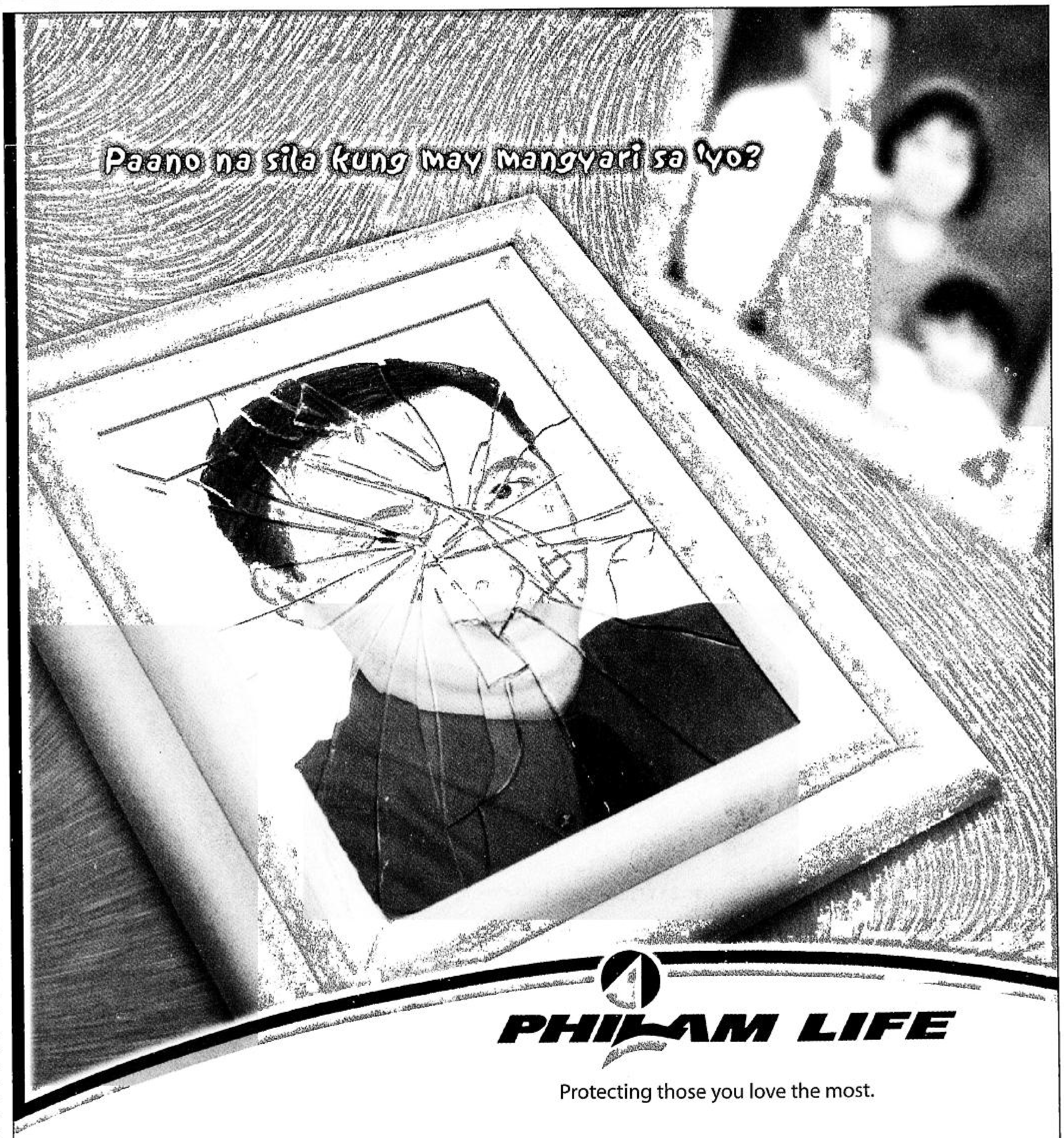
Malonzo said he would try to propose an ordinance to solve the problem. He added that garbage problem was also brought about by the fact that some areas were "highly politicized." *Tina Santos*

PWU rites tomorrow

THE PHILIPPINE Women's University will hold its 80th Baccalaureate Ceremonies tomorrow at 4 p.m. at the Bayanihan Paseo, Taft campus with a concelebrated mass to be officiated by Rev. Msgr. Bayani Valenzuela, rector of St. Andrew Cathedral, diocese of Parañaque, and University Chaplain Rev. Fr. Jun Pilotos.

Leading the investiture ceremony are Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes, Dr. Dolores B. Lasan, Registrar Lilia Robosa, academic deans, and parents of graduating students.

Nilda Rotor, president of the PWU Alumni Association, will induct the graduating students to the assciation. Master of Ceremonies is Dr. Dina Caspillo.



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Films advocating peace showcased in Kuala Lumpur festival

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE KUALA Lumpur World Film Festival 2003 opened yesterday at 8 p.m., in conjunction with the eight Conference of heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM Summit).

The filmfest seeks to promote peace, harmony, non-violence and non-discrimination. From Feb. 16 to 18, films from 40 countries will be screened free for an audience that will include some of the World's most influential decision-makers.

The festival will award films in three categories: Peace, Non-Violence and Non-Discrimination. The movies will be screened at GSC Megamall and the TGV Suria, KLCC Complex in Singapore.

The Philippine entry is Star Cinema's "Bagong Buwan," directed by **Marilou Diaz-Abaya**. The film has been celebrated both in the Philippines and in other festivals abroad, for its themes of peace and understanding, and its thematic statement, "In the end, nobody really wins in a war," is expected to ring with special pertinence and clarity at the KL filmfest.

Aside from the screenings, there will be a film symposium at the Concorde Hotel. The awards night and closing ceremonies will be held at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

The festival organizers are hopeful that the films espousing peace that will be shown in the filmfest will make a difference in viewers hearts and minds. They observe:

"The aggression, destruction and slaughter that the world has seen in the last couple of years should have taught us all a bitter lesson about the urgent need for human beings to learn to live together in peace. Yet the world today is hurtling towards still more devastating violence, perhaps even a nuclear or biological war."

"No doubt, these and similar issues will dominate the Non-Aligned Movement Conference. But let the statesmen and politicians talk. The film industry can also contribute significantly to the global effort to ward off a world war."

"Filmmakers can prove that cinema is more than mere amusement-that artistic creation in the form of movies can instill in audiences loathing for war, strife and all forms of discrimination among human beings. Indeed, movies could move people to work harder for love, peace and understanding."

"It's high time!"

"Bagong Buwan" seeks to do precisely that. Its story is set in Mindanao and focuses on Ahmad (**Cesar Montano**), who belongs to the Bangsamoro people. While others are bent on fighting for self-determination, he prefers to live a simple life as a doctor in Manila.

However, he's shocked when he hears that his son Ibrahim has been killed by a stray bullet when vigilantes indiscriminately fire at their village. He rushes to Mindanao and is urged by his brother, Musa (**Noni Buencamino**) to join the fight for independence. Ahmad chooses to continue his work as a healer - but in his war-torn homeland.

One day, Musa's men bomb a police station, and a young Catholic boy, Francis (**Jiro Manio**) is separated from his parents during the confusion. He ends up following Musa's son, Rashid (**Carlo Aquino**), who grudgingly introduces him to his family and other refugees of war.

Francis and Rashid become the personification of the rival Christians and Muslims who harbor such strong prejudices against each other. When they become friends, this intimates a hopeful future when even their elders will stop fighting and learn to also understand and like each other.

Ahmad's group flees the war and run from one place to another, looking for a safe haven in which they can resume living in peace. In his new role as a leader, Ahmad discovers the pain and suffering that his people have experienced, in this long, deadly conflict that they did not instigate.

Ahmad also learns more about his people. He sees how the government takes them for granted. He learns about how the Moro people strive to fight for their rights. He learns that the blood of a Muslim still runs in his veins-and, in the end, he offers the ultimate sacrifice.

"Bagong Buwan" also features the performances of **Amy Austria** as Ahmad's wife, **Caridad Sanchez** as his mother, and **Jericho Rosales** as a young military officer who learns to see the "enemy" in a new light.

MTRCB RATING ➤ PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

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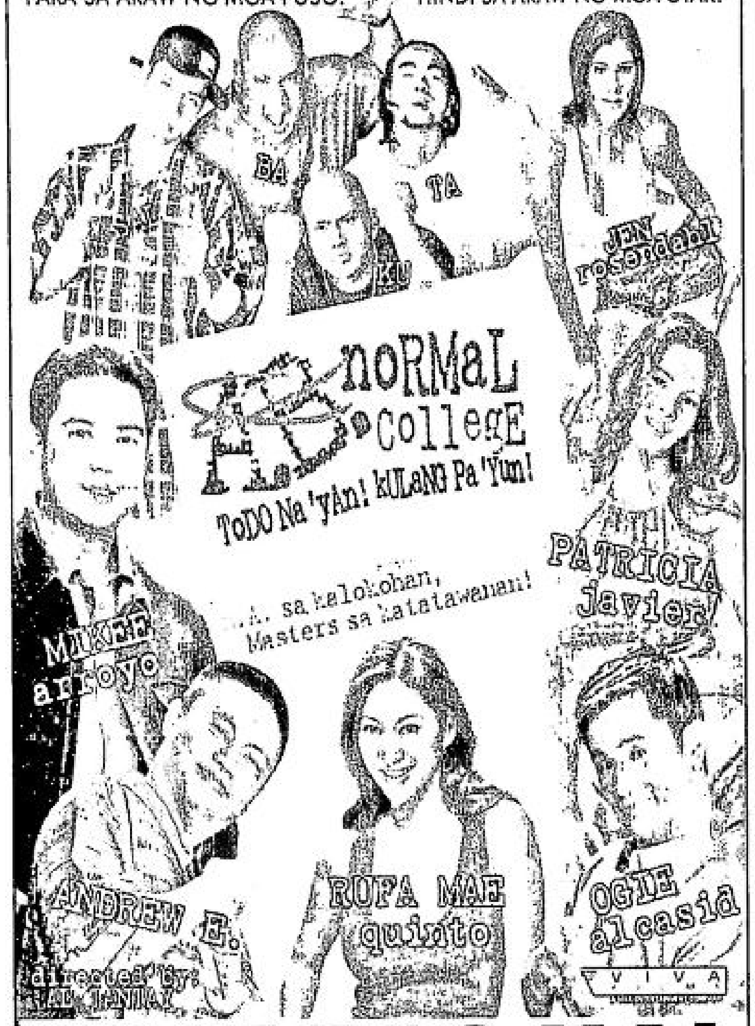
PARA SA ARAW NG MGA PUSO. HINDI SA ARAW NG MGA UTAK.



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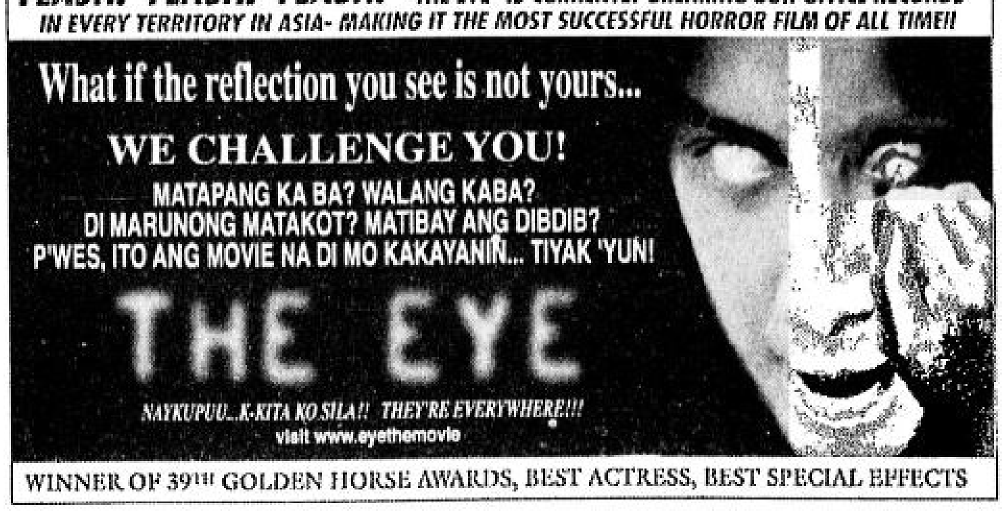

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Stolen Summer by writer/director Pete Jones is the winner of the amateur filmmaking competition Project Greenlight. Kevin Pollak, Aidan Quinn, Brian Dennehy & child actor Max Weinberg stars in the story about a Catholic boy & a Jewish boy. When the Jewish boy finds out he's dying, he works with his friends to figure out how he can make sure he gets into heaven.
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OPENS FEBRUARY 19

After 'Titanic,' Cameron documents Bismarck wreck

From page A32

advanced equipment and technology to conduct an initial detailed external survey of the sunken ship and probe its ghostly interiors for the first time ever.

Discovery Channel fully funded the three-week expedition.

Cameron guides viewers on his unprecedented journey aboard the Bismarck, using his explorer's enthusiasm and cinematic eye to bring the ship's embattled final days back to life.

"James Cameron's Expedition: Bismarck" uses Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) to explore the wreck of the massive battleship.

Long fascinated by the story of another seemingly indestructible vessel similar to the Titanic, Cameron dredges up the Bismarck's long-lost secrets.

Featuring 15-inch guns that could destroy an enemy ship more than 12 miles away, the German battleship was nearly the Titanic's length and 20 feet wider, plus half again as fast.

The program follows Cameron's personal quest to fathom this long-submerged wreck.

Cameron has written and directed (and appears in) the two-hour documentary using new footage of the ship inside and out, to re-examine how and why the ship went down.

Filmmakers employed the revolutionary camera and lighting equipment as well as Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) created for Cameron's previous underwater films, including "Titanic."

The special enhances the underwater footage with first-person interviews, commentary from historians and archival materials to illuminate the Bismarck's significance as a ship and a symbol.

The story is dramatic: From the start, the Bismarck showed the potential to dominate the North Atlantic and change the course of the war. It sank the battle cruiser HMS Hood, the pride of the British fleet, with a single shell—sending 1,400 men to their deaths.

Starting this month, seasia.discovery.com will unveil its new site dedicated to "James Camerons Expedition: Bismarck."

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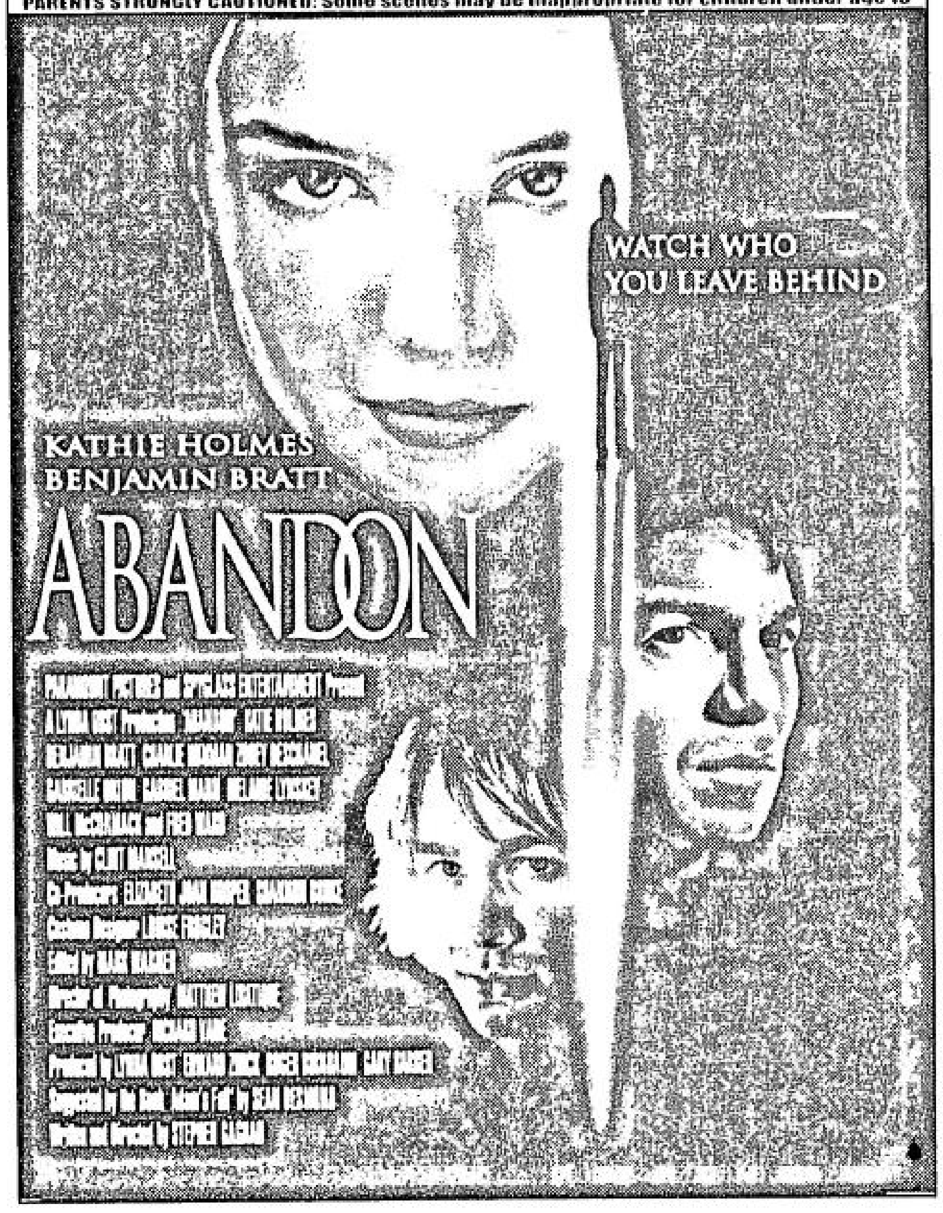

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TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	TUXEDO / CLOCK STOPPER
QUEZON CITY	
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ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAGNIFICO
CORONET B	CHANGING LANES / THE WILD SIDE
QUEZON-1	BETTER THAN SEX
REMAR	SHANGHAI NIGHTS
REMAR-2	BALAT SIBUYAS
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A	AB NORMAL
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
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CINEMA-3	I SPY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-6	EYES
CINEMA-7	FEMME FATALE
CINEMA-8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THEY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	HERO
CINEMA-12	WHITE OLEANDER
CINEMA-14	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-15	MAGNIFICO
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LNES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
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- The first really good movie of 2003! - *Lito B. Zulueta, Philippine Daily Inquirer*
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HERO **P13** 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00	**WHITE OLEANDER** **P13** 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50	**SHANGHAI KNIGHTS** **GP** 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:20

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OPENS FEBRUARY 19

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After 'Titanic,' Cameron documents Bismarck wreck

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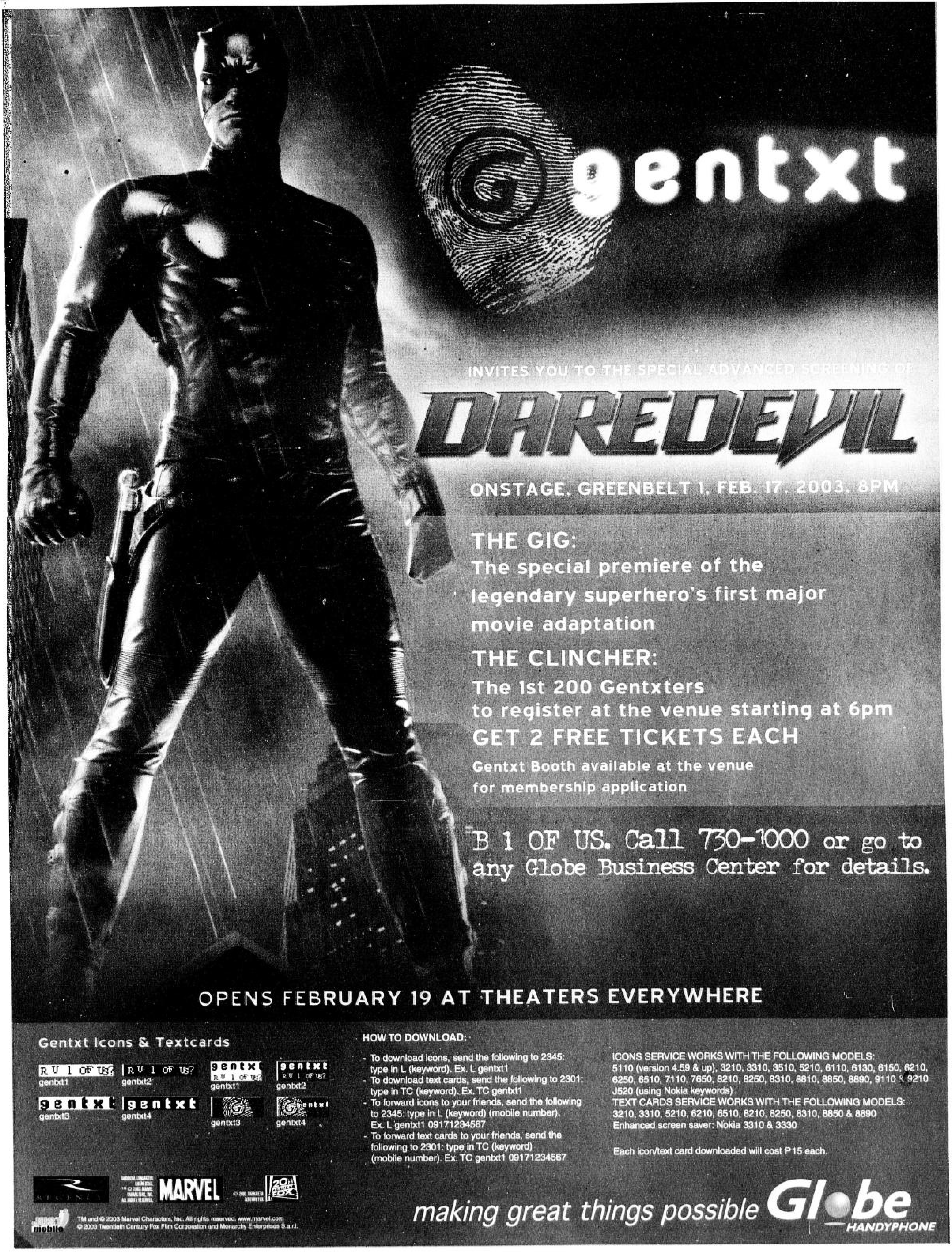
The wreck, still upright on the North Atlantic floor, lay virtually unexplored until May 2002. Oscar-winning "Titanic" director James Cameron then brought his deep-sea filmmaking expertise and newly-

AFTER/ A31

CAMERON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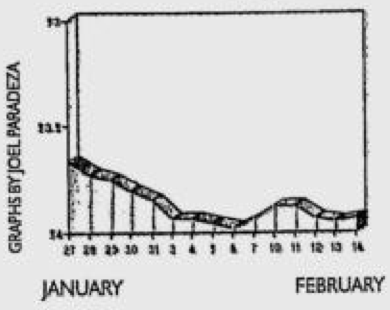


GRAPHS BY JOEL PARADEZA

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P53.935 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2003

¥120.40 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2003

GOLD: $357.50-358.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 14, 2003

Feb. 14, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.923532	1.000000	53.945000
Japan	Yen	0.007656	0.008290	0.447200
United Kingdom	Pound	1.495844	1.619700	87.374700
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118412	0.128217	6.916700
Switzerland	Franc	0.681171	0.737572	39.788300
Canada	Dollar	0.608667	0.659065	35.553300
Singapore	Dollar	0.526379	0.569963	30.746700
Australia	Dollar	0.549885	0.595415	32.119700
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.453004	2.656113	143.284000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.246295	0.266688	14.386500
Brunei	Dollar	0.524883	0.568343	30.659300
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000112	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.021472	0.023250	1.254200
UAE	Dirham	0.251466	0.272287	14.688500
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.082800	58.411600
Argentina	Peso	0.296004	0.320513	17.290100
Brazil	Real	0.251849	0.272702	14.710900
Denmark	Kroner	0.134520	0.145658	7.857500
India	Rupee	0.019333	0.020934	1.129300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243067	0.263193	14.197900
Mexico	New Peso	0.084557	0.091558	4.939100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.510888	0.553189	29.841800
Norway	Kroner	0.132920	0.143926	7.764100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016006	0.017331	0.934900
South Africa	Rand	0.110935	0.120120	6.479900
Korea	Won	0.000768	0.000832	0.044900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109806	0.118898	6.414000
Syria	Pound	0.021989	0.023810	1.284400
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026684	0.028893	1.558600
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000579	0.000627	0.033800

STOCK MARKET

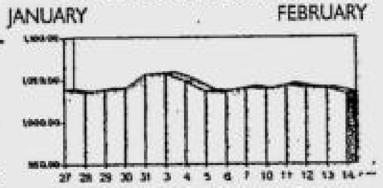
War jitters seen weighing down stocks

JITTERS over an impending war in the Middle East and the nuclear program of North Korea will continue to weigh down on local stocks this week, traders said.

Aside from the geopolitical tensions, local stocks are also taking beating from various domestic con

WAR/ B4

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PESO is seen to cross the 54-to-$1 level while treasury bill yields are expected to rise by more than a percentage point today as pressure on the government intensified after the Financial Action Task Force's decision Friday to impose sanctions on the Philippines starting March 15.

The government, however, assured it would quell any speculative attacks against the peso and reject unreasonable treasury bill offers to keep local currency and interest rates stable.

Traders said bids of banks and other dealers for government securities would depend on the movement in the exchange rate market.

"The peso is likely to breach the critical 54 level as we expect trading to be very volatile. It is not just the US-Iraq war, we also have to worry about the FATF sanctions and their impact to the economy," traders said. The peso closed at 53.93 to $1 last Friday.

The sanctions are expected to hit the country's 8 million overseas workers and their $7 billion in annual remittances.

Without the huge dollar inflow from Filipinos working abroad, it would be more difficult to address the supply crunch in the spot market and thus push the peso lower. Traders believed the peso would drop to 58 to 60 against the dollar within the year.

A volatile peso will prod banks and investors to seek a higher return for their funds placed in government securities because they could have used the money to bet on the spot market or invest in dollar notes.

"They can try but we are ready to throw away bids. We can afford to reject," National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said. He added that improved collection of revenue agencies gave the government enough flexibility to reject bids for treasuries until July.

Traders said the benchmark 91-day treasury bill yield could go up between 1.078 and 1.328 percentage points, a scenario that could push the rate to a range of 6.75 to 7 percent from 5.672 percent last Feb. 3.

The six-month treasuries could rise between 0.9 percentage points to 1.15 percentage points to anywhere between 7.5 and 7.75 percent from 6.60 percent two weeks ago.

The rate of the one-year bills could rise by as much as 1.144 percentage points to 8.75 percent from 7.609 early this month.

Treasury to float ₱20B in retail bonds

THE BUREAU of Treasury is preparing to float P20 billion worth of three- and five-year retail bonds in April, although the volume could go up to as much as P60 billion or almost comparable to the P63 billion it raised from similar debt notes in June 2002.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the government would again tap funds from small investors in the second quarter, most likely in April, to help finance the government's estimated P202-billion budget deficit this year.

The retail treasury bonds or RTBs would provide the government with another funding outlet outside the regular treasuries.

Edeza said the Treasury would cap the auction of the RTBs at about P20 billion although it could open the over-the-counter window to allow banks to buy as much as P40 billion worth of bonds.

Edeza said the bond issue would still be underwritten by state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines.

He said it was up to the two government in-

TREASURY/ B3

Senate plans to maintain tax incentives for AUVs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SENATE is pushing to either maintain the tax-exempt status of Asian utility vehicles or limit their excise taxes to a token rate of between one and 3 percent to keep these fast-selling models within the reach of a greater number of Filipinos.

This was disclosed by Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan, a member of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, who has also called on the Department of Finance to withdraw Revenue Regulation 4-2003 because it would kill the AUV industry.

Honasan cited the importance of the AUV industry in the public utility sector and in job generation in his call to maintain their tax perks in the ongoing deliberations on a draft bill amending the tax rates on vehicles.

"AUVs are now widely used as an alternative mode of transportation that is a lot cheaper than a taxi. Many retirees and returning overseas Filipino workers buy AUVs for their new source of livelihood," he said.

Honasan said it was "unthinkable" for the government to hamper the growth of AUVs (which account for 43 percent of total industry sales) which has been credited for keeping the industry afloat through the financial crisis in the last five years.

The DOF has drafted a bill proposing to shift from engine size to price the basis of taxing vehicles and abolish the 10-seater rule, which exempts vehicles with a passenger capacity of at least 10 (including driver) from paying taxes.

Honasan has proposed that the DOF should conduct a further study to determine the impact of retaining the AUVs' tax perks in order keep their prices at between P600,000 and P850,000. But if no tax exemptions would be allowed, Honasan said the DOF should limit the excise tax on AUVs to only 1-3 percent for models worth P600,000 and below.

But Honasan was more concerned on the impact of RR 4-2003 than the draft tax bill on the AUV industry.

Although Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho agreed to implement RR 4-2003 on March 31, he has maintained the cut-off date for inventories that would be covered by the new tax rates on Feb. 16.

This means that all AUV assembly packs brought in after the cut-off date would be slapped 35 percent to 50 percent in taxes whether or not Congress fails to approve the bill before it goes on recess on March 21.

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SSS: Where will the money Go?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

ALMOST unnoticed, the Social Security System ran half-page ads to announce that, starting next March 1, contributions would go up from 8.4 to 9.4 percent of payroll. The additional contribution will be paid entirely by the employers. According to law, the increase was fixed by the SSS commission and approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo. This increase will be the first of a series that will be spread out over the next few years until the contribution rate shall have reached 15 percent of payroll.

I have long felt that the contribution rate should be raised. At 8.4 percent of payroll, the contributions simply cannot support the demands from members, especially the retirees, for more benefits, not to mention the constantly escalating cost of operations. Also, I do not think there is any right-thinking employer who will begrudge his employees an increase in contributions, so long as the increase will result in additional benefits.

But will the estimated P5.8 billion in new contributions result in more benefits for the members?

Judging from the 2001 financial report, very little, if any, of the new money will go to improve members' benefits, at least not right away. In a newsletter to members of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons, national president Amado Cabaero, an eagle-eyed auditor, said the SSS has no more money. In the 2001 report of the Commission on Audit, the SSS fund had a cash and cash equivalent balance of negative P1,794,436,995. To cover this shortfall, the SSS borrowed from the Employees Compensation Fund, which the SSS also administers. Since the ECF had a positive balance of P2,467,961,436, the SSS fund was shown to have a positive balance of P673,524,441. The P1,794,436,995 "borrowing" will have to be paid with the new money.

There was a shortfall also in 2002, which was covered by borrowing again from the ECF. The new money will be used to cover this additional "borrowing." It will only be in 2003, at the earliest, when the SSS fund will start standing alone.

Also, the new money will not begin to help recover the P17.3-billion drop in total assets in 2001 and the billions more in "unrealized losses" now infesting the books. The SSS is not out of the woods yet.

There is another angle to consider. The law puts a cap on overhead expenses at 12 percent of contributions, plus 3 percent of investment and other income. In 2001, this cap was breached by about P400 million. This illegal excess was deducted directly from investment income. By accounting sorcery, the illegal excess disappeared, but Cabaero spotted it in the financial statement.

The SSS claims that deducting the excess expense directly from investment income is allowed under international accounting standards. I don't think these standards allow the SSS to cover up an illegal act. Then, in 2002, the cap was probably illegally breached again by another P400 million.

With the new money, the cap goes up by 12 percent of P5.8 billion, or P696 million. This is more than enough to cover the illegal excess. In fact, there is some money left for increasing salaries and allowances and bonuses. Not only is the illegal overspending rendered legal, but also the window is open again for more overspending.

The least that the SSS can do is match this additional money with a drastic cut in overhead. First, the SSS should dismiss all those involved in the illegal strike in August 2001. Second, the SSS should terminate all 1,700 contractual employees costing it P200 million a year. Third, the SSS should mount a vigorous campaign of redundancy to trim its bloated regular employee force of 4,000. Fifth, the SSS should terminate all the staff of the commissioners.

This question should also be answered: Why should the employers be made to pay for the losses at the SSS (which, by the way, are covered by sovereign guarantee) while those responsible for those losses go scot-free?

Finally, when the new money shall have covered the shortfall in benefit payments and the excesses in overhead, will the SSS resume its disastrous equity investments? If so, there will be certain people in and outside SSS who will be singing, "Happy days are here again!"

RP, US resume air talks

AFTER being postponed late last year, air talks with the United States will finally push through on Feb. 18 to 20, with the Philippine air panel still maintaining its stance to push an all-cargo, open skies agreement.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said in an interview that the talks would involve renegotiations of the country's existing air service agreement with the United States, which had a provision on passenger open skies.

This provision will go into automatic implementation on Oct. 1 if the agreement will not be renegotiated before then.

But Mendoza said discussions on opening up the country's skies to US carriers would more or less be confined to the cargo side, although passenger open skies could also be discussed.

"The Philippine air panel already has a position," he said.

Abigail L. Ho

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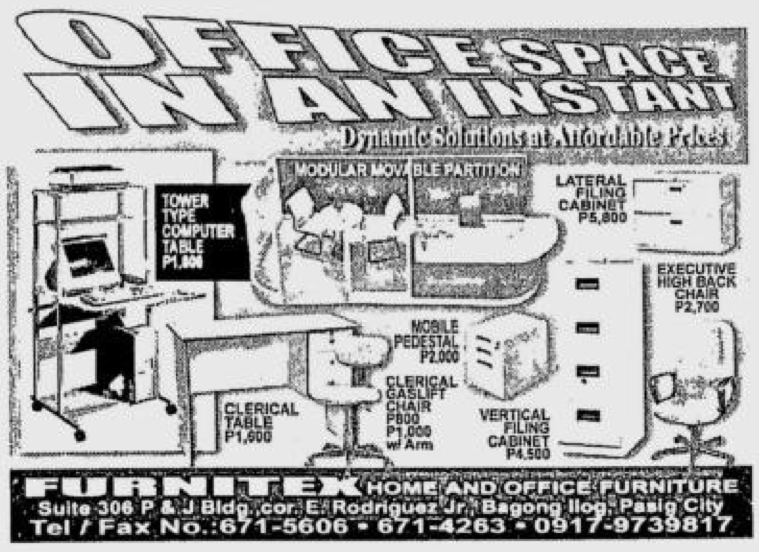

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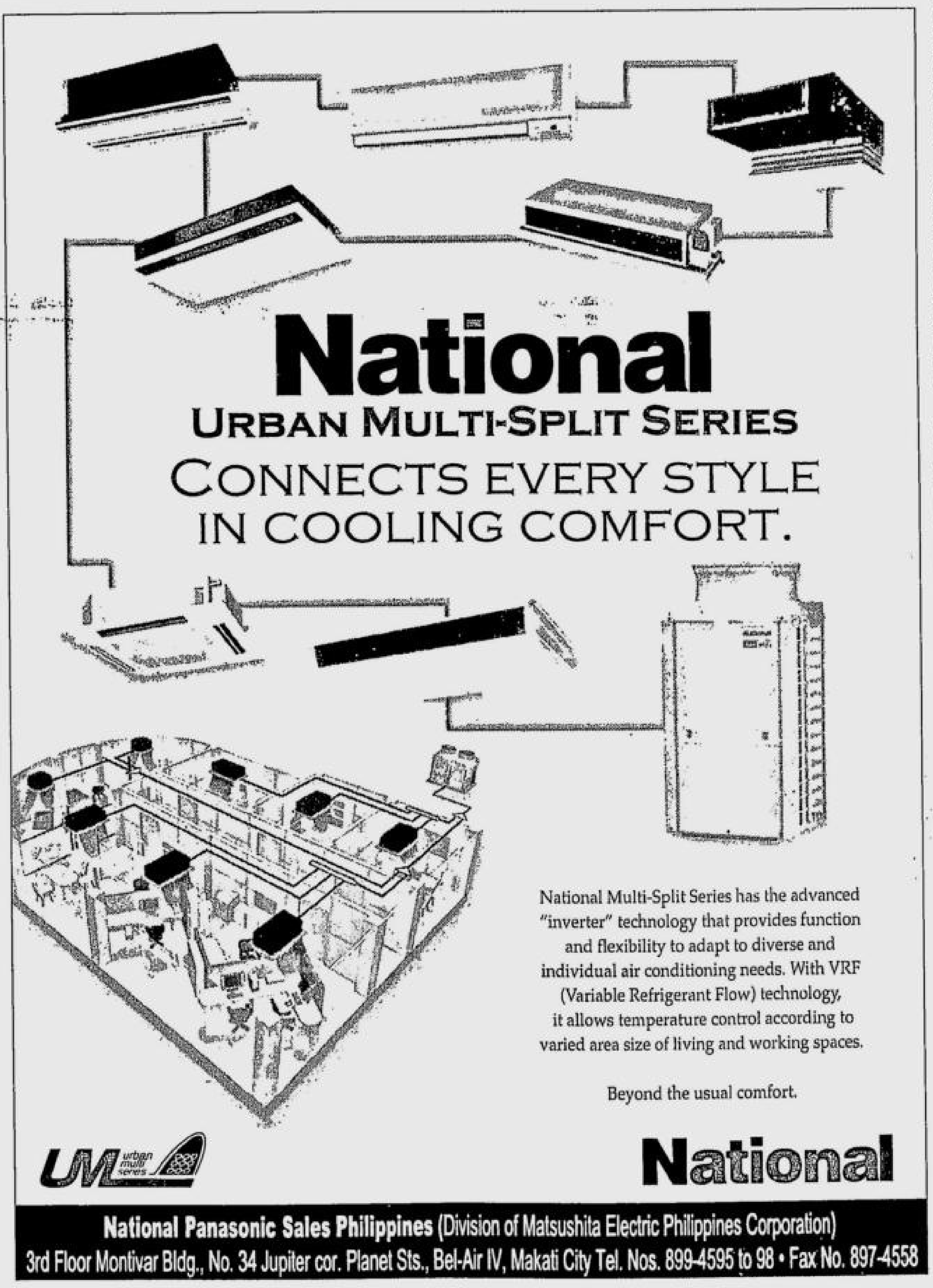

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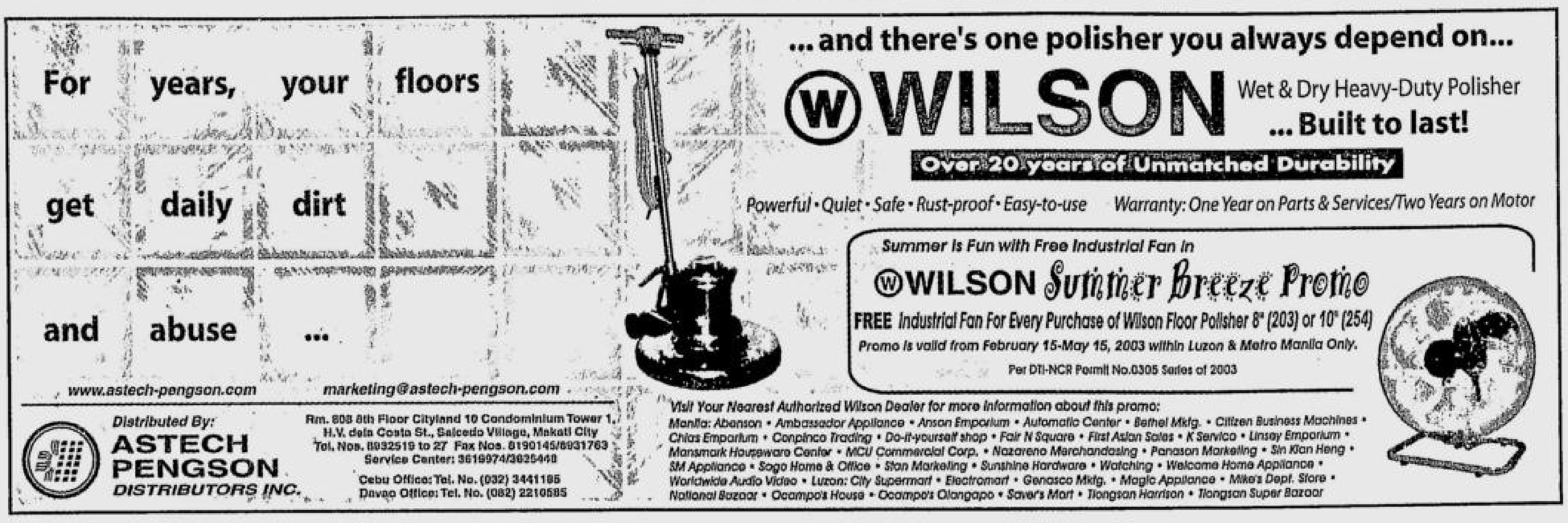

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Treasury to float ₱20B in retail bonds

From page B1

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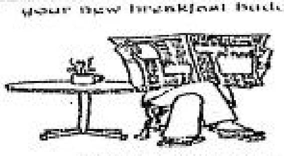

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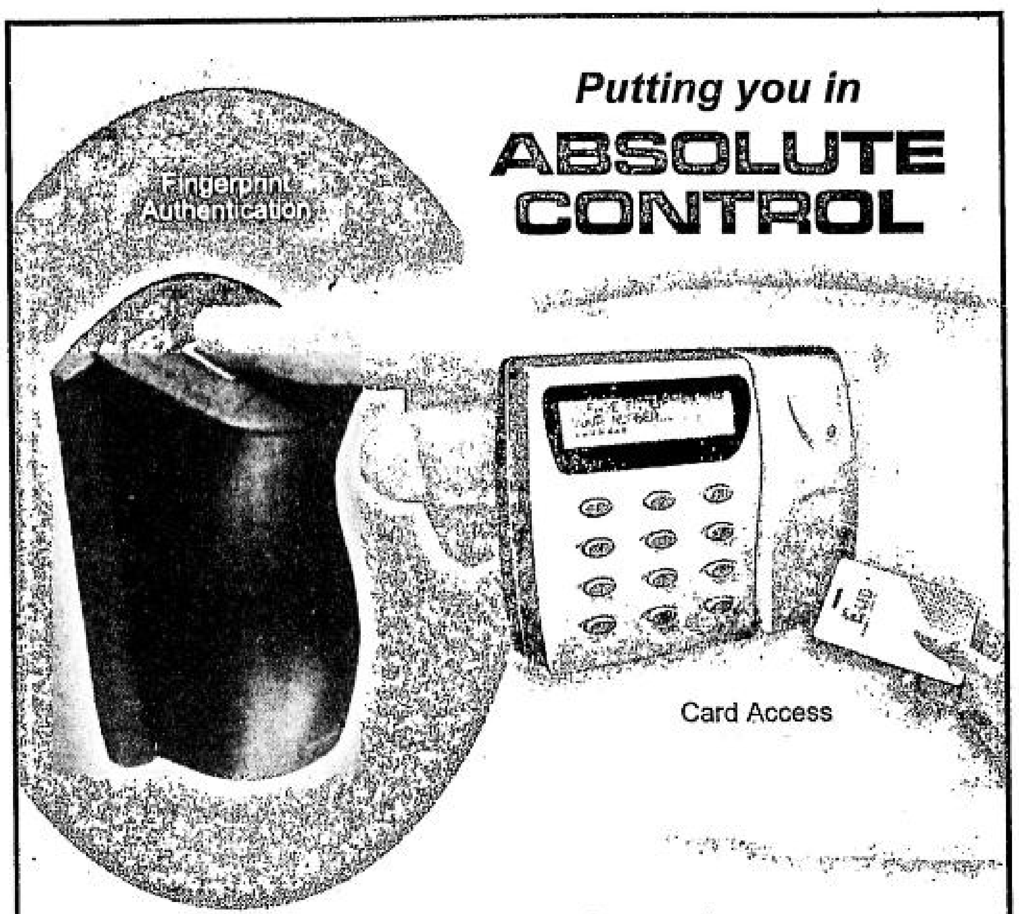

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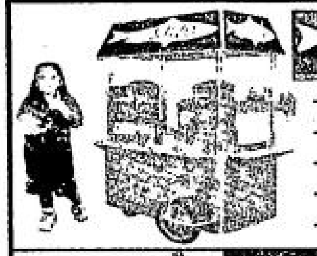

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U2 can make puns like these

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

THE MARKET went up on Tuesday following an announcement that Saddam Hussein would allow U2 to enter Iraqi space. A few minutes later came the news that he was referring to the well-known pop group. There are rumors that German HANS BLIX is actually a CIA operative named HANDS BLITZ. Iraq my brains to think up these terrible puns.

I have been very busy this week opening up the first Call Center in Tacloban speaking Warai. Better Leyte than never. I do wish that English would become the medium of instruction as I continue to have communication problems. In Glorietta, there is an aromatherapy store. A salesgirl rubbed some oil of cloves on her wrist and asked me to smell it. In all innocence, I said "I prefer you without cloves," whereupon she called the security guard. After nearly being arrested three months ago for asking for virgin olive oil, I am afraid to talk to anybody.

I tried my friend's liver flush, which I wrote about two weeks ago. It is not the most pleasant ordeal so you have to prepare yourself mentally and physically by watching Fear Factor. You can get details from the Internet by keying in LIVER FLUSH but after drinking the concoction, you will pass more motions than the Senate in 2002. After a day, your colon will come to a full stop, and you will feel better. One friend keyed in TOILET FLUSH and hasn't been seen since.

My wife and I went to the Greasy Spoon on Valentine's day but owing to readers looking up the address in the telephone directory, the place was packed and we could not get a table, so we had to go to The Split Infinitive, which is more expensive. Incidentally, if you have a split infinitive, seek medical help immediately. It could prove fatal.

I was invited to a speech by a prominent figure, who was making an impassioned plea to school teachers to change the medium to English. It was brilliantly delivered and there was an enthusiastic response. Unfortunately, I understood very little as it was in Tagalog.

The Tourist Board has adopted my slogan, "Come to the Philippines and see the Pyramids." According to the SEC, there are more pyramid schemes here than in Egypt. They offer 15 percent a month but you have to pay cash on the Nile. Only mummies are allowed to invest and the scheme sphinx.

Doctors are now prescribing statins for everybody, even if your cholesterol is normal. There are many statins but Simva is regarded as the Lion King. Production of all these drugs has been moved to Statin Island.

There was a young fellow named Sydney,
Who drank till he ruined his kidney.
It shriveled and shrank
As he sat there and drank,
But he had a good time at it, didn't he?

* * *

In the Garden of Eden lay Adam
Complacently stroking his madam,
And loud was his mirth
For he knew that on earth
There were only two balls —and he had 'em.

In recent weeks I have written about the US, Japanese and Chinese economies. I suppose I should write about the Philippine economy but I can't stand seeing readers cry. Actually, the economy was not too bad, it is the deficit that is dragging us down. I have an up-to-date table showing the GDP, inflation rate, deficit and unemployment rate of about 50 countries including San Marino, Monaco, and the Virgin Islands but I will only show a table of 15 countries.

Looking at the various countries, China stands out with GDP growth of 8.1 percent, a jobless rate of only 2 percent and a large current account surplus. If we use the United States as the bellwether, GDP is 2.8 percent but very erratic from quarter to quarter, inflation is benign, the jobless rate is falling and the yield on the 10-year note is low.

Japan is still in a mess. GDP growth is only 1.5 percent, and prices are still declining. A 10-year return of 0.82 percent indicates very low lending rates but still the country is in a recession after 12 years. The UK has done better than the rest of Europe and house prices increased by 22 percent in the last quarter. Germany, France and Italy all have low growth and high unemployment. Russia has high inflation and, therefore, a high return on the 6-month note.

Hong Kong has virtually no growth, deflation and high unemployment. Malaysia looks to be doing very well with GDP of 9.9 percent, a low inflation rate and few people without jobs. Thailand is similar to the Philippines in the first three columns but our unemployment rate is much higher and does not include an additional 15 percent partly employed (like stockbrokers). Due to our huge deficit, which shows no signs of going away, the yield on our bonds is very high.

Just out of interest, Romania has a GDP growth of 53.5 percent, inflation of 17.8 percent and a 1-year note yielding 15.4 percent. Kuwait, bordering Iraq has GDP growth of 40.8 percent, but no inflation, which is odd. Turkey, also adjacent to Iraq has an inflation rate of 26 percent and a 1-year note yielding an incredible 57.65 percent. By comparison, the yield in Brazil's 1-year note is a paltry 29.22 percent. Lastly, Venezuela has a GDP of 5.5 percent, inflation at 33.8 percent and a 3-month note yielding 40 percent. A friend of mine, who buys such stocks when nobody loves them, makes money doing so but he takes Valium every night. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

	GDP	Inflation	Current A/C Jobless	10 year Country YOY %	GDP Rate Note
USA	2.8	2.4	-4.6	5.7	3.98
China	8.1	-0.4	5.8	3.6	5.76 (5 years)
Japan	1.5	-0.3	3.0	5.5	0.82
UK	2.2	2.7	-2.1	5.2	4.20
Germany	0.4	1.1	1.9	10.3	4.01
France	1.0	2.3	1.9	9.1	4.04
Italy	3.2	2.7	0.2	8.9	3.60
Russia	4.3	15.1	7.0	7.1	15.85 (6mos)
Hong Kong	0.2	-1.5	9.2	7.2	4.49
India	5.8	3.6	0.1	n/a	6.40
Indonesia	3.9	8.7	2.7	n/a	12.68 (3 mos)

War . . .

From page B1

cerns—a possible pullout of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), risks of a downgrade by international credit rating agency Standard & Poor's and the looming sanctions from Paris-based Financial Action Task Force against money laundering.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index shed another 8.1 points or 0.78 percent week-on-week to close at 1,033.73 on Friday.

Traders said the market would continue to weaken due to the lack of fresh incentives to buy, even if stocks have hit major support levels.

"Chart-wise, Friday's close at 1033.73 highlights the uncertainty that looms over markets in the near-term, thus putting pressure on the 1,020-1,030 (support) levels," Banco de Oro chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said.

A breakdown from these next support levels, Ravelas said, could lead the market further down to the 980-1,000 levels.

"However, should the 1,020-1,030 level hold ground, expect a move back toward the 1,075-1,085 levels," he said.

Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities said: "Much uncertainties remain and until some sort of Iraqi resolution is at hand, stocks will remain under pressure as investors will keep money on the sidelines, although brief upswings are likely to occur from time to time."

However, Vistan said the market was not likely to make sustained rallies due to these global anxieties.

"Investors are not willing to place any big bets on stocks in the face of growing fears of terrorism and until there is some clarity regarding the situation with Iraq," he said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, February 14, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	29,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	34	34	33.5	34	177,600
China Banking Corp.	635	635	635	635	2,010
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25.5	25.5	24.75	24.75	96,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29.5	29.5	29	29	34,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	95	95	95	95	300
Philippine National Bank	27	27	27	27	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	54,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	29,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1220	1220	1220	1220	270
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	710,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	925	925	925	925	1,840
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	11.75	11.75	5,900
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	1,600,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	530	530	525	525	540
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	3,300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	500,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	300	307.5	300	300	162,980
Ivantage Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	30,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	23,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.7	8.7	8.3	8.3	270,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	236,700
Petron Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	569,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	50,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	77,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	17,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2.02	2.02	2	2	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	30,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	58,800
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	3,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	57	56	57	340,200
San Miguel Corp. B	64	64.5	63.5	64.5	368,100
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.95	2.95	111,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.15	4.15	813,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	502,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.1	2.04	2.1	30,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	60,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.105	0.115	14,790,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.6	115,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.26	1.26	224,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	6,050,000
Music Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.165	0.175	1,750,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	210,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3	3	5,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	500,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	10,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.25	142,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	3,000
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	15,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	9,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.002	0.0022	0.002	0.002	8,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	1,000
Far Eastern University	475	475	475	475	230
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.85	4.85	385,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	220,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	650,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	300,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	4,911,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	290,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	19,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0028	0.003	0.0028	0.003	11,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	670,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	1,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,143,420	14,991,500.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	65,066,450	115,048,235.00
PRO	6,476,000	29,043,500.00
Mining	30,960,000	342,100.00
OIL	4,000,000	6,600.00
GRAND TOTALS :	107,645,870	159,431,935.00
AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	361.84	DOWN 1.76
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,480.23	DOWN 10.39
PRO	457.57	DOWN 2.51
Mining	1,212.03	DOWN 8.60
OIL	1.06	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	624.29	DOWN 1.66
Composite	1,033.73	DOWN 6.46

Arroyo kin in heated race for bourse helm

By Doris C. Dumlao

WITH bitter rivals Vivian Yuchengco and Robert Coyiuto Jr. opting to stay on the sidelines, the race for the chairmanship of the Philippine Stock Exchange is now between a sister-in-law of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and a former bourse governor.

Persons familiar with the matter said although Yuchengco and Coyiuto were no longer running for office, next month's PSE elections were still becoming a much-contested event between Alicia Rita Arroyo of RCBC Securities Inc. and Filomeno Francisco of AB Capital Securities Inc.

Arroyo got the most votes during last year's PSE elections when she ran under the slate of incumbent PSE chair Yuchengco.

Francisco, on the other hand, has served as a PSE governor in previous terms prior to the demutualization of the stock exchange. He stepped down when a majority of the 15 PSE board seats had to be vacated in favor of non-brokers or private sector representatives in compliance with the Securities and Regulation Code.

The two standard bearers—Arroyo and Filomeno--are now finalizing the members of their respective slates.

Yuchengco's allies are expected to join Arroyo, while Coyiuto's group is backing up Francisco.

The incumbent brokers who won under the Coyiuto ticket last year—Eddie Gobing of Lucky Securities Inc., Harry Liu of Summit Securities Inc., Edwin Luy of Triton Securities Corp. and Federico Lim of Belson Securities Corp.—are seen running for reelection under Francisco's slate this year.

Yuchengco and Coyiuto agreed earlier to stay away from this year's elections in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for national unity.

Coyiuto then accepted the President's offer to become a presidential adviser on capital market development.

ICTSI bids for Polish port

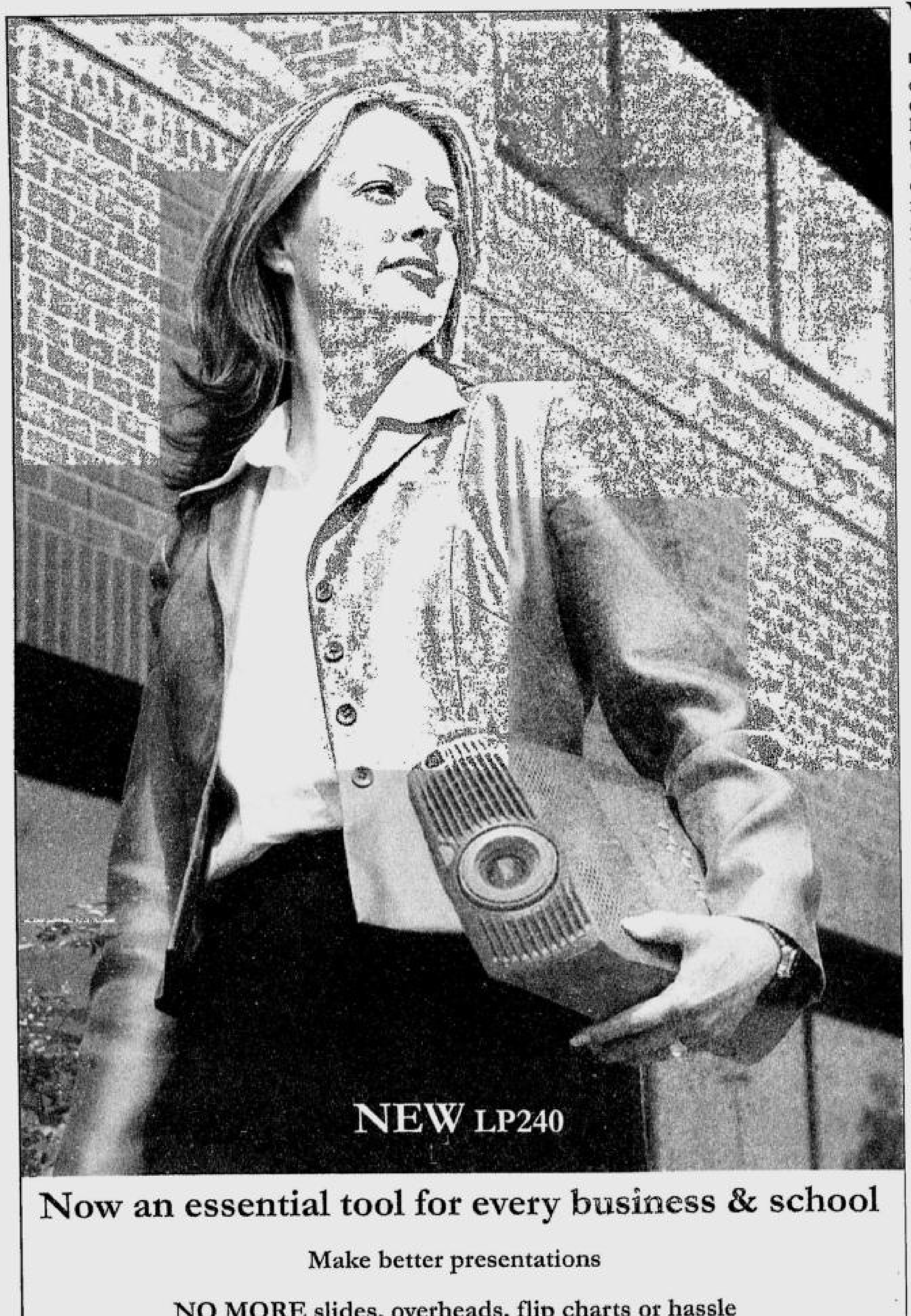
THE INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. has joined the bidding for the privatization of Port Gdynia in Poland as part of its strategy to revive its offshore expansion after the sale of its foreign unit, ICTSI International Holdings Inc.

Industry sources told the Inquirer that ICTSI was among the four groups that had been shortlisted and had submitted bids for the operations of the Polish gateway.

Results of the bidding for the Polish port will be announced in the next few weeks, the sources said.

The Port of Gdynia Authority SA has been planning to divest up to 100 percent of its shares in companies operating the port's various businesses.

Port Gdynia has a total site area of 240 hectares, quay length of 10 kilometers and quay water depth of 6.5-13 meters. It has 40 berths and fixed mobile floating with lifting capacity of up to 100 tons. It has warehouses with a total space of 230,000 square meters, including cold storage space, as well as open storage space of 400,000 square meters.



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SC rebukes Banco Filipino

THE SUPREME Court en banc has rebuked Banco Filipino for "deception," finding the bank's major shareholders of having participated in a scheme to circumvent the central bank's ceiling on real estate investments.

Strangely, the judgment, issued on Nov. 22, 2002, has not been made public by the Supreme Court even though the high court's website had already posted the December 2002 rulings.

The case itself is a judicial record of the continuing boardroom squabble within the bank that by now has spilled over to the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The case also shows how big businessmen in this country can get away with wholesale falsification of commercial documents, receiving only but a censure from the highest court of the land.

The SC decision stemmed from a 1994 ejectment case filed against the Banco Filipino Malolos branch by Tala Realty Services Corp., a landholding company whose first four letters represent Banco Filipino controlling shareholders/directors Antonio Tiu, bank founder Tomas B. Aguirre (now deceased), Nancy Lim Ty, and Pedro B. Aguirre.

In addition to the Malolos branch, Tala also wants to eject the Banco Filipino branches in Sta. Cruz (Manila), Binondo, Malabon, Marikina, San Fernando (La Union), Lucena, Iloilo, Davao, Cabanatuan and Dagupan over similar rental disagreements.

Banco Filipino itself admitted that its directors/shareholders set up Tala in 1981 wherein "the new branch sites which the respondent (bank) will be disqualified from buying...will be acquired for it by the petitioner (Tala) which will forthwith lease them to the respondent (bank)."

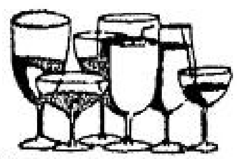
Despite such subterfuge, Banco Filipino claimed that it still owned the Tala properties, saying it had lent the money to Tala precisely to acquire the branch locations under a "warehousing agreement."

But the Supreme Court refused to buy the Banco Filipino line, since, based on the documents, "Tala truly had to pay the purchase price for the bank to sell the subject property to it and the bank truly had to pay rentals to Tala for its lease."

Still, the Supreme Court similarly rebuked Tala for submitting 11-year lease contracts for the Malolos and other disputed branches, upholding the lower court findings that "badges of fraud and simulation" were all over the submitted documents.

Banco Filipino was later able to retrieve from the central bank archives the original

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

20-year leases for the Tala properties.

The high court also rejected Tala's claim to collect rentals from Banco Filipino even after the bank was shut down by the central bank in 1985. The bank has since reopened after the Supreme Court in 1991 ruled the closure illegal.

"Upholding Tala's right to collect rent for the period during which the bank was arbitrarily closed would allow Tala to benefit from the illegal 'warehousing receipt'," the Supreme Court said.

"Just as the bank should not be allowed to benefit from its deceptive 'warehousing agreement', Tala should also not benefit from the arrangement as it was the bank's major stockholders that proposed the arrangement and incorporated Tala," said the SC decision, written by Associate Justice Reynato Puno.

"Tala committed deception by participating in the 'warehousing agreement', and committed another deception when it turned the tables on the bank and denied the arrangement.

"Allowing Tala to further benefit from the 'warehousing agreement' is unconscionable, to say the least.

"By not allowing Tala to collect from the bank rent for the period during which the latter was arbitrarily closed, both Tala and the bank will be left where they are, each paying the price for its deception," the Supreme Court added.

Still, Tala may proceed to eject the Banco Filipino branches in the absence of extension of the lease contracts, which have already begun expiring in August 2001 beginning with the Malolos branch.

The bank's former counsel, now Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban, did not take part in the proceedings.

Heard through the grapevine

PRESIDENTIAL "balae" Herman Montenegro has resigned as treasurer of the GMA-party Kampi, another indication that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is serious in not seeking another term in 2004.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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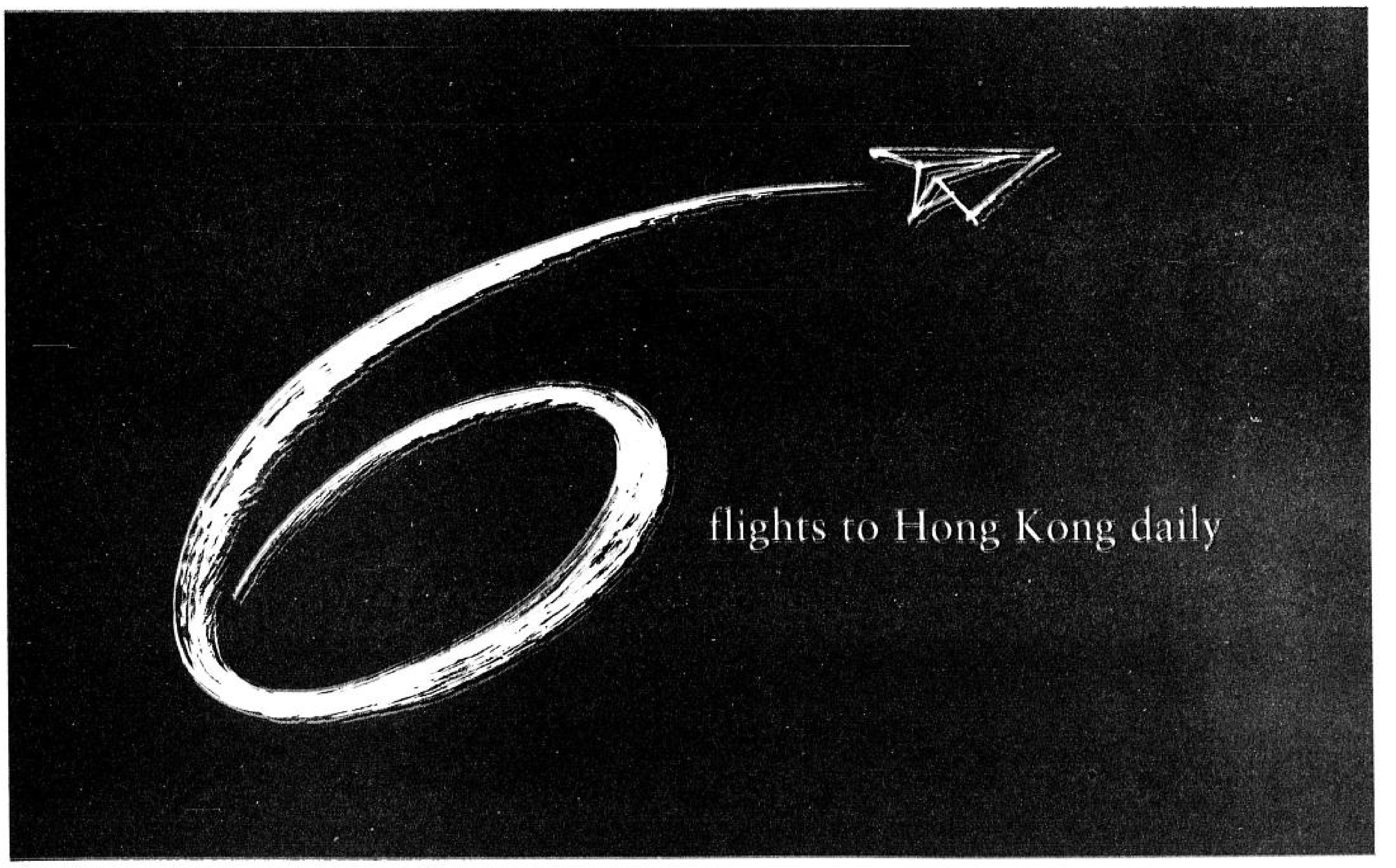
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ACCOUNTING DEBITS AND CREDITS

Outdated principles or just ethical scruples?

By Cesar A. Mansibang

COMMENTARY

NEVER has the spotlight on the accounting information presented by corporate management been so critical as today when big corporations are accused of having "managed their earnings" to look better for their selfish ends to the detriment of the investing public.

The international scandal brought about by the collapse of Enron and Worldcom, two large corporations in the United States, has put into question the reliability of financial information normally generated by corporate management and certified by external auditors.

Over the years, the Philippines has produced its own share of similar accounting scandals perpetrated mainly by corrupt management in cahoots with or helped largely by the negligence or acquiescence of external auditors.

'Singer,' not the 'song'

When scandals of such magnitude take on international and national import, hand wringing and buck passing gets immediate attention and solicited and unsolicited advice from all types of experts come to the fore.

For instance, in the aftermath of the the Enron scandal, many experts have pinned the blame on the generally accepted accounting principles and assumptions underlying the financial statements. But it took away the spotlight from the culpability of management who may have acted in collusion with their external auditors to "window-dress" the financial statements.

Before Enron and WorldCom, the Philippines has its own share of such similar scandals and it does not offer comfort to the investing public when a reputable auditing firm admits that it was had by corporate managers in allegedly misrepresenting and withholding information in the financial statements that it certified as clean.

While auditors hide in the caveat that their opinion is rendered based on random tests of the accounting records and that the financial statements are the main responsibility of management, it does not offer comfort that as experts in the profession, they could be given the runaround by unscrupulous corporate managers and come out untarnished.

Is not professional diligence one of the major standards of fieldwork that they are supposed to uphold?

These malpractices run contrary to the Code of Professional Conduct of the accountancy profession. The Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants mandated to safeguard and to uphold the integrity of the profession is helpless.

Part of the problem is because the partners of auditing firms and some of their officials are visible members and many times officers of the association either by direct participation or by proxy.

On the other hand, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is not effective in cracking the whip on erring auditors of corporations. No one has ever been penalized for certifying misleading financial statements. No partners or officials of auditing firms have been charged and jailed with their clients for wittingly falsifying the financial statements.

Recent developments have shown that the SEC has taken a more assertive role in safeguarding public investors' interest. But such responses are basically reactions to events and could lose steam as soon as the events die down.

What needs to be implemented is a rational, systemic and strategic framework that is consistently and effectively applied and not wait for another Enron or Victorias Milling to happen.

The external auditors have the obligation to act in favor of society in general and the profession in particular. They have rights and privileges given by the State to perform as certified public accountants for the benefit of the "public," which is the most important operative word

Neutrality of principles

The main issue in accounting scandals is the ethical behavior of both management and auditors. The issue that accounting has not really progressed over time in that it still uses many principles and assumptions that are no longer effective because of globalization, advancements in information technology, and the changes in business cycles.

For instance, the valuation of assets and the reporting of off-balance sheet transactions take a major area for assessment in the way financial statements are traditionally presented.

The other interesting area is in the area of the timing of the realization of revenues and costs whereby traditionally, revenue is recognized only when there is actual sale and delivery and to be recorded only for a time-period; it does not consider advance delivery for the future even if payment for such delivery has already been made.

In the same way, the treatment of cost related to the current and future revenue provides wide latitude on the part of management to either recognize it as asset or expense. The bottom line, thus, changes depending on the method used.

With the advent of innovative products and services and diversified operations, this tradition may no longer be applicable. Thus, management judgments have to be relied upon. The auditors are not of help because they also do not know the solution. The accountancy profession, thus, must initiate change itself or it will suffer the fate of the dinosaurs.

The Accounting Standards Council of the Philippines, the body that oversees the development and application of accounting principles, has recently come up with its new Statement of Financial Accounting Standards to make local accounting practices in tune with international accounting standards.

But the application of accounting principles is decided upon by management and auditors based on general acceptance. Thus, accounting principles are only neutral tools and are used only at the behest and judgments of corporate and professional pundits. They are not the culprits in the scandals hounding the industry today. It is the corrupt decision making that makes accounting information unreliable.

They can be used consistently and fairly and appropriately disclosed where necessary. External auditors, on the other hand, are supposed to make sure that by virtue of their training and expertise, such financial statements adhere to these standards of reporting.

Accounting practices

But what could happen in significant cases is that some external auditors compromise principles and code of ethics for financial gain. They cannot afford to lose a major client whose billing potential amounts in the hundreds or even millions of pesos.

In this way, compromise decisions become a commercial issue and not a professional one.

Competition is another major factor. All the bigger auditing firms in the Philippines have strategically allied with the international accounting organizations in the world, i.e. Arthur Andersen of the Enron fame or notoriety, Price Waterhouse Coopers, and so forth.

One way or the other, these alliances put pressure on local firms to maintain their clients at all costs. And this is where potential compromise can come in.

With the statutory audit requirements and the proliferation of external auditing firms and individuals performing the same, the market has become a buyers' market where the corporations can choose their auditors.

Because of this bargaining power, there is the likelihood that auditing firms may not exercise some sort of due diligence in engaging clients. They could relax their standards in making a decision to engage the client at great risk to their reputation.

Also, they may not refuse clients with strong connections to the business or government. This may not be unethical per se but it becomes an ethical dilemma when conflicting interests arise.

Corporate governance

One of the major responses that business and professional auditing organizations have come out with to address the issue of transparency and accounting scandals is the establishment of good corporate governance, which has become another buzzword in the lexicon of management and professional pundits.

The fear, however, is that such paeans to the importance of corporate governance to avoid scandals like these would soon dissipate just as fast as the novelty wears away and becomes a commonplace lexicon either because it has become second nature to organizations or it was all bark and no bite at all.

Why this skepticism? Let us look at the components of this new lexicon. It involves four components: the board, management, internal controls and audit mechanisms. These are basically structural and procedural mechanisms to help ensure transparency and accountability.

The assumption is that if these were present in organizations and implemented, then there should be no problem with corporate transparency and accountability. This assumption rests on tenuous grounds. Many laws and regulations and even corporate structures and policies have in many ways, been honored in the breach rather than in the observance.

Their presence or implementation does not always measure up to corporate transparency and accountability. Pretty soon, loopholes will be exploited to beat around these laws, regulations, and structures. Then, they become just a set of rules without compliance.

The fundamental issue of choice and clash of values is at the core of this problem and not just a set of structures. The value of ethical behavior clashing with the quest for unbridled profit taking for selfish gains is central to the decisions to be made.

Surely, corporate governance includes the promulgation of codes of conduct for everybody. But when conflict arises between transparency and the motive to keep profits at all cost, how does the board or management behave? It would be a difficult task to decide because the temptation to keep good profit reports is very strong. The board and management are thus placed in an ethical dilemma that cannot just be resolved by standard answers.

High personal integrity and ethics is the more difficult challenge. Where does it really start? It starts when the members of the board and management themselves have developed a deeper sense of social responsibility and personal integrity.

No matter how competent the board and management are in implementing structures to oversee corporate behaviors, their effectiveness will only be as sure as the personal ethics of the individual members is to take account.

Dr. Stephen Covey put this seeming dichotomy into an integrated model of behavior. Character and high personal integrity must get hand in hand with competence to become highly effective individuals. One without the other will not work in the long run.

Conclusion

Good corporate governance may be a good starting point in the elimination of accounting scandals of this magnitude. But this structure should be underpinned by uncompromising ethical and deep personal integrity by those who implement it so that any clash of value would be resolved in its favor.

Transparency and accountability are effects of the personal ethics and integrity of the members of the board and are not just jargons to mouth for convenience's sake.

The external auditors on the other hand, have the obligation to act in favor of society in general and in the profession in particular. They have rights and privileges given by the State to perform as certified public accountants for the benefit of the "public," which is the most important operative word.

With the requisite skills to perform their functions effectively, they should always grapple in favor of a principled practice and look at the larger and longer gain instead of the narrower and shorter gain.

For the profession, it should police itself and become a more effective catalyst of the profession for ethical conduct and implement sanctions on those who flout it. Moreover, it should be viewed as the visible place for continuous review and improvement and development and training of the members to become ethically minded.

Finally, government should support the initiatives to change and crack the whip on auditing firms that violate the ethics of the profession and betray the trust that the public put on them by virtue of their being riposted the title independent CPAs.

There are ongoing attempts to speed up accounting reforms abroad and we are aping it here. But no matter how governments, professions, and corporations agree to change and implement improvements in accounting principles and assumptions, they become meaningless until a principle-centered and ethical professional and corporate practice becomes the scruple of the day.

(The author is currently the registrar of the Ateneo Professional Schools Graduate School of Business. He also teaches Organizational Development, Financial Management and Strategic Management. He was an auditor of PriceWaterhouseCoopers and is one of the directors of the Institute of Internal Auditors.)

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Camp John Hay	220,000	240,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	90,000	110,000
Celebrity Sports Club	145,000	160,000
Club Filipino	-	160,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	185,000	200,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	250,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	230,000	275,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,000,000	13,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,500,000	11,500,000
Manila Polo	2,400,000	2,650,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	525,000	550,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	600,000	730,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	630,000
Metropolitan Club "A"	90,000	120,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	100,000	130,000
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Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	325,000
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Mt. Malarayat (Individual)	-	300,000
Mt. Malarayat (Corporate)		450,000
Puerto Azul	-	100,000
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Philexim to set up P1-B fund for SME export firms

By Elena R. Torrijos

STATE-OWNED Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency is planning to set up in May a publicly listed, P1-billion closed-end fund that will invest in profitable export companies.

Philexim president Joel Valdes said unlike other funds, the Exporter's Capital Fund-Unit Investment Trust would guarantee the return of investors' principal.

This could be assured because 30 percent of P1 billion to be raised by ECF-UIT would be invested in 10-year zero-coupon bonds to be issued by the Philippine government, he said.

The remaining 70 percent would be used to invest in exporters or export-related companies with at least five-year track records in profitability.

Valdes said he was considering investments in 100 to 200 small and medium-size exporters and less than 50 large export-related companies, including San Miguel Corp.

Investments in the exporters could come in the form of equity, quasi-equity, debts and quasi-debt securities, he said.

Valdes said investments in small and medium-size export companies should provide a much higher return than other types of investments. ECF-UIT will be managed by the Philexim fund management group.

The government-issued 10-year zero coupon bonds will be held until maturity to protect the principal, while investments in Philippine exporter companies will be held for a maximum of seven years each.

However, under certain circumstances, investments in exporter companies may be called or redeemed or sold.

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Club Filipino	170,000	150,000
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Eastridge "B"	140,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fontana D/C/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Forest Hills "A"/C*	200,000/250,000*	-
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	10,500,000	11,000,000*
Manila Polo	2,550,000	2,400,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	260,000	220,000
Manila Yacht Club	610,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	550,000/720,000*	450,000
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Smuggling killing local shoe industry

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

VIC Sabiniano, 41, has been a shoemaker in Marikina for more than half his life, but he has never seen dress shoes that cost only P40 a pair, not even if you go to world's shoe factory—China.

Sabiniano said one could probably get a pair at that price when the Beatles were still together but not when he started his trade and especially not now when raw materials for basic men's leather shoes cost at least P600 a pair.

But P40 a pair has been the average import price assessed by the Bureau of Customs on dress shoes—under the category footwear with outers of leather and uppers of leather—based on imports as of September 2002.

Data furnished by the National Statistics Office and Bureau of Export Trade Promotion showed that the import volume of dress shoes grew by 2,824 percent to 2.4 million pairs in 2001 from only 81,858 pairs in 1997.

During the same period, the import value rose 134 percent to $2.4 million from $1.035 million, as the average imported price of $12.65 a pair in 1997 fell to $1 in 2001. You don't need to be a Wharton graduate to figure out that this is technical smuggling of the worst kind.

Sabiniano, president of the Samahan ng Magsasapatos sa Pilipinas, has asked the Department of Finance to stop this "gross undervaluation" of shoe imports coming from China that has affected not only dress shoes but the entire, century-old shoemaking industry in the country.

Shoe imports have soared over 200 percent from 28 million pairs in 1997 to 60 million pairs last year, while their value has dropped by 71 percent during the same period, Sabiniano said.

"There is no reason behind the sharp decrease in value because material costs, which account for 80 percent of the shoes' total cost, have not gone down during the period," he said.

Sabiniano said his group was not asking for special tariff protection or other safeguard measures to parry the Chinese shoes assault, although it did not rule out applying for these safety nets in the future. It is merely asking the customs bureau and the finance department to do their jobs properly and fairly.

He said clamping down on technical smuggling would not only ease the beatings suffered by local shoemakers against their Chinese counterparts. It will also help the government save the local footwear industry and plug the revenue drain brought about by the under-valuation of imports, he said.

The SMP estimates that the government has lost some P14 billion—P7 billion in taxes and P7 billion in duties—since 1997 by tolerating the rampant technical smuggling of shoes.

Apart from the imposition of the right import value, the SMP is also pushing for the creation of a National Footwear Authority that will have the same function as the Videogram Regulatory Board in going after bootlegged shoe brands.

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Aries Espinosa, Editor

Aromatherapy: A healing art

EVERY woman should know what she would do, wouldn't do for love. She should know how to fall in love without losing herself. She should have her own choices, which nobody else can dictate. A woman's heart is like a treasure-filled chest full of love. She wishes nothing but the best for her family and loved ones and her every action emits that natural glow from within. What is best about a woman is her instinct. She knows whom she can trust, and whom she can't.

Mons Romulo-Tantoco, a woman in control of her destiny knows very well whom she can trust. A caring mother to three kids and a loving wife to her husband, she can't afford to entrust her family's health to just anyone.

Mons, a woman who values the importance of well-being and good health for her family and loved one gives her full confidence to Nature's Essence Aromatherapy, a line of essential oils proven to cure illness and remedies.

"I have been debilitated by severe asthma and allergies all my life. I've tried every drug and medicine imaginable, some costing an arm and a leg. But I have discovered that the natural methods have worked best, especially Aromatherapy.

Having found the answer to her health needs, Mons recently became the official endorser of Nature's Essence Aromatherapy which are essential oils from Canada that helps promote health of body and serenity of the mind. These products which were produced from concentrated plant extracts which are anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and anti-viral was formally introduced to the media at the Manila Peninsula Hotel.

One of the evening's highlights includes the product unveiling wherein various dancers dressed in immaculate white costumes interpreted Nature's Essence ability to alter body chemistry therefor producing therapeutic effects.

Present during the event are husband and wife tandem Jude and Lloyd Barran, two marvelous pharmacists who brought these remarkable products here in the Philippines. Lloyd who has been very active in the research and developments of these oils spoke about the wonderful benefits one can get from aromatherapy. The key according to him, lies in the oils all natural component.

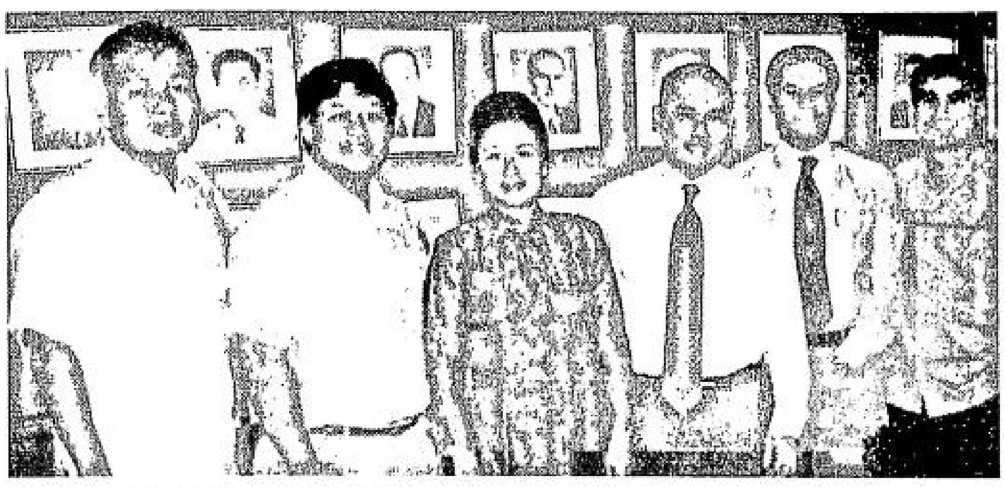
Family and dear friends of Mons also came to show their support. Husband Sander Tantoco was there to give support his lovely wife. Presidential daughter Luli Macapagal-Arroyo and Canadian Ambassador to the Philippine Robert Collette graced the evening with their presence. It was truly an eventful night filled with beautiful fragrances and beautiful people.

The healing art has really touched the life of Mons and the lives of her family as well. Asked why she chose to endorse Nature's Essence, Mons says its because "it's not exclusive and it's affordable. The wonders of aromatherapy can be accessible to more people."

Nature's Essence Aromatherapy products are available at all Health-food and Herbs outlets, Caswell-Macey branches at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall and at Park Square, Glorietta and will soon be distributed at all SM Watsons outlets.

ANTON San Diego with First Daughter Luli Arroyo

MONS Romulo-Tantoco – endorser of Natures Essence



INTER-SCHOOL SPORTSFEST

Representatives from Harvard, Northwestern, Wharton, Columbia and Stanford recently met to plan the Annual Inter-School Sportsfest, which will be held on June 1. Interested alums may contact their school representatives to join. Attending the meeting were (from left) Peter Coyuito (Wharton, pcoyuito@firstlife.com.ph), Eric Ramirez ((Stanford, scrap@info.com.ph), Kim Camacho (Harvard, kim.camacho@sothebys.com), Jojo Poe (Northwestern, jbpoe@info.com.ph), Duane Santos (Wharton, duanesantos@greenfield.com.ph) and Poopi Estrella (Columbia, fpel@columbia.edu).

TEAMBUILDING MEET

The Center for Values and Professional Development of Meralco Foundation Inc. (MFI) conducted a teambuilding seminar for the rank and file and supervisory level of Penn Phils. Inc. held at the Tesda Women's Center in Taguig. Topics discussed bordered on enhancing relationship, value of people, commitment, etc. Sheree Refuerzo (standing, extreme right) of MFI and Ramvi Zambrano were the resource speakers.

PPLIC celebrates emerald anniversary

THE PHILIPPINE Prudential Life Insurance Company Inc., one of the country's leading providers of life insurance, marks a milestone this year with the celebration of its emerald anniversary on Feb. 18 at the Centennial Hall of the Manila Hotel. The event will carry the theme, "Life Gets Better at 40," with the company's promise to give its clients a lifetime of excellent service.

During its 40 years, the Philippine Prudential Life Insurance Co. has secured its place among top players in the country's life insurance industry. Daniel Mercado, president of PPLIC, said he is proud of what the company has achieved over the years and that he is optimistic that the company will continue to grow strong to be able to fulfill its mission among the masses, who he said, are the primary market of the company.

"The market base continue to grow each year, and we at PPLIC are able to address the specific needs of our clients, who are assured of prudent and sound management, coupled with dedication and unmatched service that are certified to meet our obligations to our policy holders today in the future," Mercado said.

"Our products are not only necessities but should also be considered securities and guarantees to peace of mind. In time of crisis, Filipinos can cling to the securities that PPLIC provides," he stressed.

The Philippine Prudential Life Insurance Co. Inc. is also one of the very few insurance companies that is 100 percent Filipino-owned since inception, giving the Filipino families truly-Filipino products and services that identify their basic needs.

With these, it will come as no surprise if Philippine Prudential Life Insurance Co. emerges at the top of the life insurance industry by the time it marks its golden anniversary.

CHEF MEETS THE BAKER

The winning recipe in the recently concluded 'Chef Meets the Baker' baking category held at the SM-Megamall last Dec. 15 sponsored by Magnolia Gold Butter is the 'kalabedan' (kalabasa, ube and pandan fusion). The original recipe was one if the entries from Polytechnic University represented by Melinda Verances and Reonisa Esturas. The judges were from left, product manager Pia Yuchingtat, chef Kim Lori Ngo of CCA, Ms Heny Sison, winners and coach, Magnolia's national sales manager Noel M. Tempongko, San Miguel's chef Rene Ruz and chef Martin del Prado.

SMB PROMO GRAND PRIZE WINNER

San Miguel Beer and MTV Asia congratulate Ricky dela Cruz of Capitol Hills, Quezon City for winning the grand prize in the San Miguel Beer Party Chain Frequency Card raffle promo. Dela Cruz and three of his friends, Martin Araneta, Carlos Ventosa, Emmanuel Partido, went on an all-expense paid trip to Singapore to watch the annual MTV Asia Awards last Jan. 24. The promo was implemented in celebration of the 2003 MTV Asia Awards MTV Asia where San Miguel Beer is a regional sponsor. SMB also dished out a trip to Singapore for Mayola Abaya and Joy Salubayba of Side Bar Malate. Dela Cruz' raffle stub was dropped at that participating bar. Expect more exciting promos as San Miguel gears up to keep the bar circuit and nightlife alive all-year round.

'Musical Memoirs', 'Golgota' at FEU

"MUSICAL Memoirs," a concert of dance and music, will be staged by the President's Committee on Culture as one of its contributions to the diamond jubilee celebrations of Far Eastern University on Friday, Feb. 21 at 10:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. at the newly renovated FEU Auditorium with state-of-the art facilities. Admission is free. Featured performers are the FEU Pangkat Kawayan, the FEU Dance Troupe, and the FEU Drum and Bugle Corps. On Feb 28 at 3:15 p.m., the committee will also present at the FEU Auditorium, in collaboration with the Cultural Planners Association of the Philippines headed by international pianist professor Zenas Reyes Lozada, "Martir sa Golgota" under the direction of Manila Councilor Lou Veloso with a cast of almost 100 persons.

'Men of You' Party

YOU MAGAZINE, together with U of Rustan's, is hosting a denim party dubbed "All for You," featuring the 50 hottest Men of YOU 2002 from YOU Magazine's roster of eligible men. U of Rustan's starts off with its newest denim collection in a great fashion show. Timepieces and eyewear provided by Oakley. Essenses of Rustan's will treat you to makeovers. Guests can drink and feel San Miguel's Erg and Cruzan martinis during the open bar from 9 to 11 p.m. Epson will also delight the guests with souvenir photo sessions with the men. As YOU Magazine, U of Rustan's, Essenses, Oakley, Erg, Cruzan and Epson say, this is "All for YOU." Come in your U of Rustan's jeans to the Forum, 3rd floor of the Podium on Feb. 21, Friday, and celebrate the hottest men with U of Rustan's and YOU Magazine.

Seminar on alternative medicine

THE CAREER Center and Training (CCAT), a Tesda-accredited institution offering caregiver training, will be holding a two-day seminar on alternative medicine on Feb. 22 and 23. The seminar is recommended not only to those seeking options for health and physical fitness but also for those seeking income opportunities, particularly in the field of aromatherapy. Resource speaker is Ronnie Royo, president of the Philippine Association of Massage Therapists and honorary member of the International Register of Massage Therapists in London. The enactment of RA 8423 provides for the acceleration and development of alternative health care in the Philippines. The seminar will be held at the CCAT headquarters at the corner of Emilia and Bautista in Barangay Palanan, Makati. For inquiries or reservations, call CCAT at 559-1592 or 559-1593.

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TOP TEA BRAND FOR 2002

Gold Leaf, one of the country's leading brands of teas and herbal infusion products, was recently named the country's Top Tea Brand of the Year in the 19th Annual Year-Ender Consumers Excellence Awards at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The annual awards honors outstanding consumer products, business entities, services and manufacturers which have served the well being of the general public. Gold Leaf products include Dandelion Herbal Infusion – an alternative health drink that promotes the body's natural regenerative properties and washes away unhealthy substances and toxins, Chamomile Herbal Infusion, and the Oriental and specialty blend of teas such as Green tea, Jasmine tea, Oolong, Strawberry and Mint, among others. Gilamar Enterprises is the sole distributor of Gold Leaf products, which are available in the tea section of leading Metro Manila supermarkets and grocery stores. Gilamar Enterprises VP for marketing Ephraim Young (center) is shown receiving the award from Who's Who in the Philippines chair Jonathan Navea (left) and committee special projects director Esperanza Robel (right).

FCFBPWP INDUCTION OF OFFICERS

The Cebu Chapter of the Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business and Professional Women of the Philippines held their induction of officers last Dec. 7 in Cebu City with Senator Serge Osmeña as inducting officer and guest of honor, and Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña as special guest. Present to witness the induction ceremonies were representatives from Fil-Chi's national chapter composed of its president, commissioner Myrna T. Yao, Betty Aw, Elena Go Dee, Rosanna Hwang, Nellie King, Maricor Malitao and Nancy Tang. Inducted were Emily Lim Chiau, president; Lily Tanyu, executive vice president; Tina Lo, vice president for internal affairs; Iris Ng, vice president for external affairs; Helen Ong, vice president for business; Mercy Rama, vice president for government; Josefina Sy, assistant vice president for government; Perla Momongan, secretary; Vicki Dakay, treasurer; Grace Ng, assistant treasurer; Grace Go, auditor; and Rosie Binghay, press relations officer.

LOREN AT CGSC

Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda (center) poses with Col. Rodolfo Obaniana (fifth from right), commandant of the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) of the Philippine Army; Col. Carlyzar Divinagracia (left), guest lecturer and academic adviser; and other CGSC officers after delivering a lecture on the Politics of Legislation in the Philippines and AFP related bills. The occasion was held at the CGSC in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

US VS JAPAN, EU

WTO agri talks hit deadlock; farmers march

TOKYO—Ministers from more than 20 countries sent a WTO blueprint for reforming farm trade back to the drawing board on Saturday as crucial trade talks kicked off in Tokyo to the sound of protest from thousands of farmers.

After the opening session of the World Trade Organization talks on the divisive farm trade issue, an EU source told Reuters that the WTO's chief agricultural mediator had agreed in the face of stiff opposition to redraft his blueprint for reform.

Stuart Harbinson's plan, released earlier this week, had proposed cutting the highest import tariffs on farm goods but not imposing ceilings on those duties.

The plan pleased neither of the two main camps in the talks: the United States and other big exporters that want aggressive liberalization; and the more protectionist Japan and EU, which want less drastic change.

"Everyone agreed it was a good catalyst for debate," the EU source said. But he added that since members believed it could not form the basis for negotiations, Harbinson had agreed to go back to the drawing board.

Debate over how far and how quickly to tear down barriers affecting world farm trade is set to dominate the three-day meeting, part of WTO trade liberalization negotiations launched in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001.

Reuters

US production up in January

WASHINGTON—Big industry broke out of the doldrums in January, turning in its strongest performance in six months, and businesses boosted stockpiles in December to satisfy consumers' appetites. They're promising signs for a struggling economy.

Production at the US factories, mines and utilities, which had been mired in a funk, shot up by 0.7 percent last month, the Federal Reserve reported Friday. That was a turnaround from the steep drop of 0.4 percent registered in December and marked the best showing since July.

The industrial sector, hardest hit by the 2001 recession, has been the biggest drag on the economy's struggle to get back to full throttle. But the Fed's report offered hope that the battered sector may be seeing better days ahead.

"The broad-based improvements in manufacturing output point to a revival in that sector," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisors.

In other encouraging news, businesses increased inventories of unsold goods in December by 0.6 percent, twice as big as November's rise and the eighth month in a row that supplies were boosted, the Commerce Department reported. Businesses' sales rose 0.2 percent in December, up from a 0.1 percent rise.

AP

Hyundai sets venture launch

SEOUL—Hyundai Motor Co. said on Saturday it would launch as early as March of this year a 50:50 commercial-vehicle joint venture with DaimlerChrysler AG capitalized at 108.1 billion won ($89.91 million).

Hyundai, 10 percent owned by DaimlerChrysler, said last year it expected the joint venture to be launched within the first half of this year.

The South Korean auto maker said in a statement DaimlerChrysler would buy half of the 21.63 million shares to be issued by the new joint venture, tentatively named Daimler Hyundai Commercial Vehicle Corp., for 426.5 billion won.

The assets of the joint venture, to be located in Hyundai's Chonju commercial-vehicle plant in southwestern Korea, was valued at 649 billion won, Hyundai said.

The joint venture would enable DaimlerChrysler, the world's largest truck maker, to streamline spending by sharing development and component costs, analysts said. Hyundai stands to gain a greater slice of South Korea's market for large trucks, while tapping other Asian markets.

Sweden's AB Volvo and Scania dominate South Korea's market for trucks.

Hyundai's ties to DaimlerChrysler include a joint venture formed in 2001 to produce diesel engines.

Reuters

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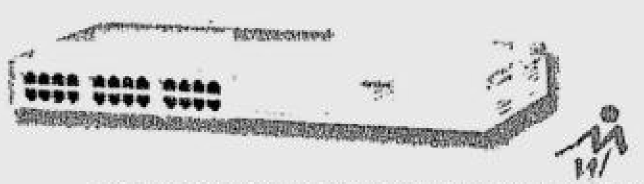

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SALCEDO REMODELED 1BR MUST SEE NR MKT SPORT 5473471

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

SALES EXECUTIVE
MALE, BELOW 25 YRS OLD PREF. W/ EXPERIENCE APPLY AT 11 ANNAPOLIS ST., SAN JUAN UNIT 1609 ANNAPOLIS WILSHIRE

NOTICE OF LOSS
United Coconut Planters Bank
Makati Avenue, Makati City

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Fifteen (15) booklets of UCPB Manager's Checks bearing serial numbers SAF 0000010501-0000017250 and Twenty Five (25) bklts. of UCPB FCDU Passbook (Form #4-3305) bearing serial numbers 143504-143528.

The above missing forms, in the custody of the courier at the time of loss have been cancelled and invalidated and transactions covered by them shall be dishonored.

(Sgd.) TERESITA V. RIVERA
AVP- Corporate Services Division

(PDI – Feb. 17, 24 & March 3, 2003)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

BEAUTY CONSULTANT 527-1590

FEMALE SECRETARY Executive Assistant, strong English, Computer skills, open personality, Php12,000 per mo. to start-up to Php30,000 90days work in Mktl. Fax resume to Mr. Rose 897-7300

STAY-IN SECRETARY or OFFICE HELPER 25yrs. old below Single • 363-62-47

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HRD STAFF 09204114147 MS. ALISON

HRD/OfcStaff09205765380Dang

HRDSTAFF JERS 09195584846

HRDSTF 09167054572 NESS

MERCHANDISERS 527-1590

OFC Staff 0920 8062187 Bea

OFC STAFF 18-45 M/F Coll. Grad/ Level w/-or w/ o exp Call SHIE # 437-0454

OFC STF 09208090709 ADRIL

OFFICE STAFF 09192535623 GLENDA

Urgent Ofc Staff/Personnel
18-45yo w/wo exp Start ASAP Direct Hire 9121488 Mr Garcia

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

CAREGIVER TRNG 5276418

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given for the Loss of Celebrity (Sports) Plaza Inc. Stock Cert. # A0010 (corporate" A") issued to Beguet Rocks Agro Industrial Devt. Corp. If no contest received, New Certificate will be issued PDI- Feb. 17,24 & March 3, 2003

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of ROQUE DE LOS REYES has been settled extrajudicially among his heirs with sale per Doc. 261, Page 54, Book X, series of 1989 of Notary Public Paterno G. Tiamson.
(PDI-Feb. 10, 17, & 24 2003)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given regarding the loss of Summit Publishing Company Inc. O.R. #s 6851-6900 and P.R. #s 4951-5000 and SH Publications Inc. O.R. #s 3601-3650 and P.R. #s 01951-02000. Any transactions covered these shall be dishonored by the companies mentioned.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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B/SELL FULLY PD EDUC PLAN 780-0106 / 0917-7939632

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722-1144/
722-1155

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of PHILNOR AQUA INC. with office address at Bgy. San Miguel, Quezon, Nueva Ecija for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as Now Producer of Tilapia (Fingerlings and Full Grown) at the following capacity:

Tilapia Fingerlings – 60 Million fingerlings per year
Tilapia Full Grown – 264.6 MTPY

with project site at same office address stated above has been officially accepted on February 6, 2003 and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 6th day of February 2003.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI – Feb. 17, 2003)

For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:

HEAD OFFICE:
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MAKATI:
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Trans-Co
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: February 10, 2003
Loan No.: EDCF PHL-3
Contract No.: Sp96.EDCFTLSE.Lms-0136

1. The **National Power Corporation (NPC)** has received a loan to be extended by the Export-Import Bank of Korea from the resources of the **Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF)** of the Republic of Korea towards the foreign exchange cost of Luzon Transmission Line and Substation Projects. NPC intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the Contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Line Materials and Substation Equipment for various Luzon Transmission Line and Substation Expansion Projects.**
2. The National Power Corporation now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders from the Republic of Korea for the Supply and Delivery of Line Materials and Substation Equipment for Various Luzon Transmission Line and Substation Expansion Projects under contract No. **Sp 96.EDCFTLSE.Lms-0136.**
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents starting **February 21, 2003** at the address given below from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

   Office of the Manager
   Bids and Contracts Management Department
   2nd Floor, Building 2, NPC-OBC
   National Power Corporation
   BIR Road corner Quezon Avenue
   Diliman, Quezon City (Zip code: 1104)
   Philippines
   TeleFax: (632) 921-2308
4. A complete set of bidding documents in *English* may be purchased by interested eligible bidders or authorized representative upon submission of a letter of intent to the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **ten thousand (Php 10,000.00) Philippine Pesos or one hundred eighty five US Dollars (US$ 185.00)** per set.
5. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the amount of not less than **Korean Won, one hundred twenty two (122) million** and must be delivered to the above office address on or before **April 11, 2003** at 1:30 p.m.
6. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2) sealed envelopes, one containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially, only the technical proposals will be opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified Bidderrs or which are not substantially responsive will be rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals, which have been submitted by qualified bidders, will be requested for full compliance to the specification but without changing their price proposal. Bidders who do not wish to amend their technical proposal will make their bid non-complying and will be rejected.
7. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the hour and date, and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval by the Bids and Award Committee of the evaluation of the technical proposal.
8. Bids received will be opened in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend at 1:30 p.m. on **April 11, 2003**, Solarium, NPC Building Complex, Diliman, Quezon City.
9. The National Power Corporation will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation and delivery of bids.

BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

By: (Sgd.) **WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman

(PDI - Feb. 17, 21 & 27, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
MANDALUYONG CITY

IN THE MATTER OF THE :
TAT LAKEHILL GOLF AND
COUNTRY CLUB, INC. : REGISTRATION OF SECURITIES
REGISTRANT

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on February 13, 2003, a sworn registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and in behalf of the TAT LAKEHILL GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, INC. (Corporation) for the registration of its Five Thousand (5,000) No Par Valeue Shares, composed of 1,200 Class "A" Shares, 800 Class "B" Shares, inclusive of 15 Founder's Shares, 1,800 Class "C" Shares and 1,200 Class "C" Shares, out of which Four Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Five (4,985) shares owned and subscribed by the Selling Shareholders, TAT Development, Inc. and TAT International Co. Ltd., will be offered to the public, on secondary basis at an offer price of Four Thousand Pesos (PhP4,000.00) per share for Classes "A" and "B", and Fifty Thousand Pesos (PhP50,000.00) per share for Classes "C" and "D".

According to the papers/documents presented, the following are the incorporators/directors of the Corporation:

Name	Position
TSUTOMU MUGURUMA	President
EMILY DOMICHI	Comptroller
ROSELILY TORRIJOS	Corporate Secretary
MIHO OTA	Operating Officer
MARITES GURIMBAO	Finance Officer
HIROFUMI HOTTA	
FRANCISCO ANCHETA, JR.	

Said Registration Statement and other papers, documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours, and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

for: Justina F. Callangan
Director
Corporate and Finance Department
Securities & Exchange Commission
EDSA, Mandaluyong City

(PDI – Feb. 17 & 24, 2003)

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone: 893-1320 loc. 5115 Fax 840-1461

INVITATION TO BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested accredited or prequalified contractors to submit sealed bids for the project:

FABRICATION, DELIVERY and INSTALLATION of ELLIPSOIDAL HEAD for LGPF SEPARATOR VESSEL SL-609 under Bid/Project No. EDC 03-013

Bid documents may be secured from the Contracts Administration Group (c/o I. M. CORCUERA) starting **February 10, 2003; 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.**

For purposes of clarification, a pre-bid meeting will be held on **February 17, 2003**; 2:30 p.m. at PNOC-EDC's Conference room, Ground Floor, Bldg. V at the above address.

Sealed bids in two (2) sets shall be received by the Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than 2:00 p.m. of February 25, 2003 and then publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC Chairman

(PDI – Feb. 17, 2003)

SAN BEDA GRAND ALUMNI HOMECOMING 2003
(Golden and Silver Jubilarians: HS '58 and HS '78)
"Hinahanap-hanap kita, San Beda, ... I'm Coming Home."
Saturday, February 22, 2003, 4:00 p.m.
San Beda College
Mendiola, Manila

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AT Onstage GREENBELT

On **February 24 and 25, 2003**, the INQUIRER's **JOB MARKET** will host "**JOBZ Resumé Central**" at On Stage Greenbelt. A two-day activity geared at gathering and collecting resumés with the aim of building a database of possible applicants for **JOB MARKET** advertisers to further make their hunt for the right applicant seem almost effortless.

Advertisers who are interested in placing an ad in the **Feb-23** issue of **JOB MARKET** can choose from different packages we offer.

JOB Market
JOBMarket ONLINE www.jobmarketonline.com
AYALA CINEMAS GLORIETTA 1 & 4 • GREENBELT

✂ -

If you're interested to place an ad in the **February 23** issue of **Job Market**, kindly fill up this form and fax to any branch near you. ☐ Please call me ☐ Please send me more info

Name: ____________________
Address: ____________________
Company: ____________________
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SILVERIO DURAN PACAS

Executive Vice-President /
General Manager – United Dockhandlers, Inc.
President and Chairman of the Board
La Camelle School, Inc.

Peacefully joined our Lord on February 15, 2003 at the age of 63.

His bereaved wife **Josefina**; children **Rey** and **Tina**, **Ver**, **Dan** and **Agnes**, **Ken** and grandson **Yvan Andrei**; relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.
His body lies in state at his residence in Phase 2 C Pisces St., Camela Homes, Bacoor, Cavite.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 23, 2003, 2:00 p.m. at the Angelus Eternal Garden, Bacoor, Cavite.

Please omit flowers.

"Surely Goodness and Mercy shall follow me
All the days of My life And I shall dwell
In the House of the Lord, Forever." *Ps. 23:*

DANILO SANTOS BALMACEDA

Sept. 15, 1950 – Feb. 13, 2003

His bereaved family, relatives, and friends joinly pray for Peace of his soul.

Interment will be on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2003 at St. Mary Magdalene Cemetery, Limay, Bataan after the 3:00 PM Mass.

ASUNCION "NICA" V. VERGARA

25 March 1915 – 9 January 2003

We thank you

for your presence, your prayers, your e-mail and text messages, your kind words, your cards and flowers. You have been of great comfort to us during our time of bereavement.

Willie, Marissa, Lynette and grandchildren

In Loving Memory

On the Fifth Death Anniversary of

1LT RICKY A CHUA 0-11800 (SC) PA PMA '95

09 May 70 - 17 Feb 98

Five years ago
Our beloved Ricky
Joined the Lord in eternal rest

...absent with the body, to be present with the Lord
Matthew 10:39

Announcing the untimely demise of our beloved

RUBEN KAW ANG

of Capitol Chemical Products, Inc., Marulas, Valenzuela, Bulacan

who joined our Creator on February 11, 2003 at the age of 46.

His loving parents **Ang Khong** a.k.a. **Jose Young** (†) & **Elena Kaw Ang**; brothers, sisters & in-laws: **Salvador & Ruby Dagohoy, Dr. Robert & Dra. Belen Dy, Judith & George Chua Cham, Joseph & Charito Solis, Juanito** (†), **Jaime & Karina Nava, Fernando & Ma. Elizabeth Uy, Josephine, Jocelyn & Roel Asinas**; uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends request those whose lives he touched to remember him in their prayers with love and thanskgiving.

His body lies in state at the La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, February 19, 2003 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City at 9:00 a.m.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die." *John 11:25-26*

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

In Loving Memory

On the First Death Anniversary of

MARCELLINE S. FLORES

of Barasoain, Malolos, Bulacan

February 16, 2002

"The most caring and generous person one could ever hope to meet."

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609;
Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A.B. Fernandez Ave.,
Dagupan City, Pangasinan
Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City;
Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL
CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad,
Mandaue City, Cebu;
Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
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Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City;
Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
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HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
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Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705;
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RP schools getting wired nationwide

MORE universities and learning institutions in the country are now connected online via fast, dedicated networks, signaling that the use of the Internet in education is becoming more pervasive in the Philippines.

In Manila, the University of Sto. Tomas—one of the oldest universities in the Philippines—has reported that it now has a dedicated broadband Internet access infrastructure. In Laguna, San Juan de Letran College, Calamba, has reported that it has upgraded its Internet infrastructure.

UST and Letran are members of the Dominican Network or DomNet, an organization of Dominican schools in the Philippines with more than 150 affiliate schools.

The two schools are spearheading the creation of a network for DomNet, providing fast Internet access as well as an intranet set up for member schools.

The plan is for students of DomNet member schools to go online and use the network for various purposes including checking of schedules online, e-groups and collaborative efforts such as online study groups, according to executives of UST and Letran.

Internet cafés located inside the campuses will be established, serving as access points for students to browse and use the network.

For the DomNet project, local Internet service provider DigitelOne has been tapped to provide the access.

According to DigitelOne officials, the Internet pipeline for DomNet is similar to the one used by corporate entities, connecting DomNet directly to US-based providers UUNet and AT&T.

In Mindanao meanwhile, Silliman University in Dumaguete City is taking a different approach in its online efforts, reportedly wiring its entire 33-hectare campus with a fiber optic connection via wireless local area network.

School officials claim Silliman University is the first school in the country to deploy wireless LAN technology in its campus, which is an inexpensive way to connect the number of buildings scattered around the campus to the Internet, instead of copper-based cables.

Aside from e-mail, one of the more practical uses of the network is that students can now "visit" the school library online.

School officials further said that the LAN network—powered by 3Com—will be expanded not only to the other school buildings but to dormitories as well.

Quadmedia News Agency

Virus dupes users with nude photos of Hollywood stars

A NEW Internet worm that dupes users with pictures of Hollywood star Catherine Zeta-Jones in compromising poses, is making rounds in the Internet, a UK-based anti-virus firm warned.

Sophos AntiVirus said that users of the file sharing system KaZaA and IRC instant messaging are the targets of this worm, which also claims to contain pictures of other celebrities such as Britney Spears, Shakira and Sarah Michelle Gellar.

Sophos said the worm contains the Igloo worm, which is a backdoor Trojan horse that would allow another computer user to take control of computers remotely.

Charles Cousins, managing director of Sophos Anti-Virus Asia, said: "We all know the saying that curiosity killed the cat. In this case the curious user looking for dirty pictures of celebs is likely to be one who is compromised."

Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

Unfitting . . .

From page B14

simply does not do justice to Bruce Lee's grace. Sure, the enemies are aplenty, similar to what you would expect in a Bruce Lee movie. Yet the punches and kicks of the Xbox version of Lee simply do not catch the grace of the original master. Granted, it would be difficult for any computer-generated, motion-captured program to recreate the moves of someone like Bruce Lee, but the moves in Bruce Lee: QOD are simply ludicrous compared side-by-side with shots of him in action on film.

And what's the deal with the jerky movements and pauses? There are times when, while surrounded with many enemies, the game pauses for about a half second or Bruce Lee jerks from one place to another, spoiling the continuity of the action.

This isn't the first time Universal Interactive flubbed a Hollywood-related game. There's "The Thing," "Jurassic Park," "The Scorpion King," "Fellowship of the Ring" and now there's Bruce Lee. This game is definitely not a good way to celebrate the 30th death anniversary of one who shone so bright, only to find his digital reincarnation dimming the lights of his legacy.

I have nothing good to say about Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon. So I guess I better shut up now.

Sun's 'network is computer' vision evolves

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

FOR MORE than 20 years, Sun Microsystems has remained steadfast in its vision that "the network is the computer."

Sun's vision of computing back then was one that is decentralized and yet is shared, which makes for a simpler and manageable computing landscape. But during these times when most enterprises are expected to spend less on hardware, Sun has added a twist on its mantra, and is now adding the words like "affordable" and "simple" as buzzwords to the repackaged vision of computing.

Dubbed "Network Computing 03," Sun officials said that its vision of computing has gradually changed to fit the requirements of the market, which is expecting faster returns on its investment, and opting to deploy smaller yet robust systems rather than huge machines in an increasingly complex network.

During a simultaneous global announcement, Sun unveiled a suite of products that would place the company head on with hardware giants like IBM and HP.

One of the highlights of Sun's launch was its so-called "blade servers" that support both its own operating system Solaris and Linux, a free operating system that has gained a foothold in the enterprise market."

Sun is focusing on innovative products that embraces both Linux and Unix," said Cynthia Mamon, head of Sun Microsystems Philippines, during an interview in Manila.

Mamon said that Sun is gradually moving into the midrange market for servers, where blade systems have become staple. Sun claims that its new blade server is taking "blade computing to the next level," as it introduced a system that could support multiple operating systems like Linux, Solaris and technically rival Windows NT of Microsoft and HP-UX of Hewlett-Packard, Mamon said.

The new blade server, which is based on an Intel-x86 architecture, is expected to be deployed en masse in data centers, Sun officials said."

The data center of the future will be made up of smaller and smaller computers in greater and greater numbers. Sun's goal is that these can be divided up fluidly and automatically as demand rises and falls.

"Our N1 architecture sets out to integrate all the elements of your systems into a single, efficient, network computing engine," said Anil Gadre, vice president, software marketing.

Gadre added: "Take the human body as an analogy, the human body is full of extreme complex integrated systems, but you don't have to consciously focus on most of them; breathing, heart rate, temperature metabolism and many other functions are automatically regulated so you can focus on more important, higher level functions. Well, that's what N1 does for your computer network—frees you up to focus on the higher-level management of your business computing system."

Other products unveiled include N1 Provisioning Server 3.0 Blades Edition software for Sun customers; a 12-way data center server priced to compete with Wintel systems (Windows systems which run on the Intel microprocessor platform); a faster, copper-based UltraSPARC III 1.2-GHz processor; a high-end Sun XVR-4000 graphics accelerator packaged with a workgroup Sun Fire system for high-performance visualization applications among others.

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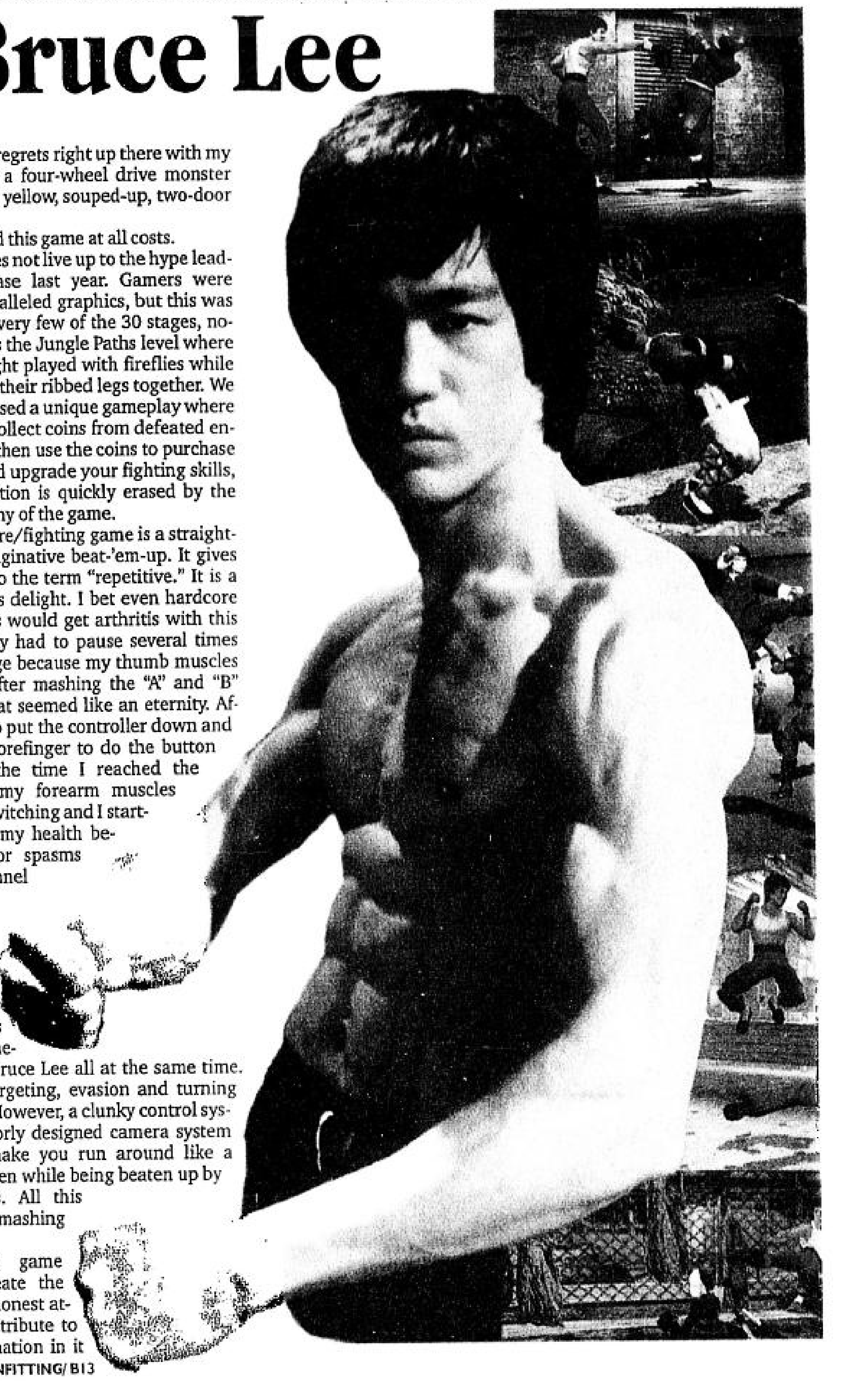
Unfitting tribute to Bruce Lee



By Leo Magno

LET'S cut through the chase in this review, shall we? This game sucks harder than any black hole known to astronomers.

Worst. Fighting-adventure game. Ever.

Thirty years ago in 1973, the legendary Bruce Lee passed away. Thirty years later in the era of rap and hip-hop, we find him alive again in a video game that serves as an unflaterring tribute to a man who would no doubt break the Xbox with a one-inch punch were he still alive to play the game.

We review this game on the XBox

"Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon" (QOD) is the master's first video game appearance since "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" was released on the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and the Sega Saturn in the early '90s. Surprisingly, there have been few officially licensed Bruce Lee games, although the martial arts fighting game genre remains a very popular one, and a lot of characters loosely based on Bruce Lee are still around. Games such as Virtua Fighter, Dead or Alive, Tekken and even the horrendous Kakuto Chojin all have fighters which are Bruce Lee clones.

Bruce Lee: QOD is developed by Ronin Entertainment and published by Universal Interactive. Universal holds the rights to many film-based games, and so far they have impressed gamers with the consistency by which they churn out one poorly developed Hollywood-based game after another.

My mention of this age being one of rap and hip-hop also pertains to Bruce Lee: QOD. After the great Bruce Lee meditates and performs his trademark moves on a beach at the opening sequence of the game, you are taken to the main menu. At the main menu, a rap song pipes in from the background—slowly increasing in volume and reaching a crescendo of stupidity and incongruity unmatched even by the moronic soundtrack of "Street Fighter: The Movie" starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Kylie Minogue. Bruce Lee and rap thrown together in the mix? Unthinkable! This is sacrilege, I tell you! I appreciate the developer's efforts to give a contemporary feel to a game based on a guy who's been dead for 30 years, but the result is simply idiotic!

The premise of Bruce Lee: QOD is not based on any Bruce Lee film. Instead, the Jeet Kune Do master is on a quest to recover a relic needed to save his kidnapped father from the Black Lotus organization. The game features more than 100 Bruce Lee moves, and the animations are based on actual motion captures from one of Bruce Lee's students.

Sounds exciting? It does. Being a Bruce Lee fan, I had the game right up on my list of must-haves along with Resident Evil for the Gamecube. After purchasing and playing the game, however, Bruce Lee: QOD became on top of my list of regrets right up there with my decision to buy a four-wheel drive monster jeep instead of a yellow, souped-up, two-door sports Lancer.

In short, avoid this game at all costs.

The game does not live up to the hype leading to its release last year. Gamers were promised unparalleled graphics, but this was evident only in very few of the 30 stages, notable of which is the Jungle Paths level where the dying sunlight played with fireflies while crickets rubbed their ribbed legs together. We were also promised a unique gameplay where Bruce Lee can collect coins from defeated enemies. You can then use the coins to purchase more moves and upgrade your fighting skills, but this innovation is quickly erased by the overall monotony of the game.

This adventure/fighting game is a straightforward, unimaginative beat-'em-up. It gives new meaning to the term "repetitive." It is a button masher's delight. I bet even hardcore button mashers would get arthritis with this game. I actually had to pause several times during one stage because my thumb muscles became sore after mashing the "A" and "B" buttons for what seemed like an eternity. After that I had to put the controller down and use my fresh forefinger to do the button mashing. By the time I reached the fourth stage, my forearm muscles were already twitching and I started to fear for my health because of minor spasms and carpal tunnel syndrome.

The controls are also horrendous and unpredictable. The game throws in several enemies against Bruce Lee all at the same time. This makes targeting, evasion and turning kicks crucial. However, a clunky control system and a poorly designed camera system conspire to make you run around like a headless chicken while being beaten up by the bad guys. All this while you're mashing the buttons.

While the game tries to recreate the master in an honest attempt to pay tribute to him, the animation in it

UNFITTING/B13

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Nokia sheds another 550 employees at network infrastructure division

HELSINKI—Nokia of Finland, the world's largest mobile phone maker, said it would lay off 550 employees at its networks division, currently suffering from lower infrastructure investments by mobile phone operators.

"The planned actions mean reductions in the number of employees by approximately 550 positions in the US, the UK, Sweden and Finland," Nokia said.

The ailing division's sales have slumped as mobile phone operators are delaying their investments in next-generation, or 3G, mobile phone networks. 3G networks promise to deliver mobile multimedia services.

Last year Nokia was forced to lay off 10 percent of the arm's workforce of 18,000 in an effort to cut costs and keep it profitable.

While some 20 percent of Nokia's $32.25 billion in sales in 2002 came from the network side, only 10 percent of its profit of $4 billion stemmed from infrastructure sales.

Nokia employs around 60,000 people worldwide.

AFP

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IT security market to reach $45B

THE GLOBAL information technology (IT) security business—including software, hardware and services—will reach $45 billion in the next three years, according to research firm International Data Corp.

This increase in the security business in 2006 is significant compared to the 2001 total of about $17 billion, IDC reported.

IDC also predicts that in terms of segregation, security hardware presents the strongest opportunities for growth with a 25-percent compound annual growth rate from 2001-2006, followed by services at 24 percent and software at 16 percent.

IDC senior analyst Brian Burke said "although many IT markets declined from 2001 to 2002, a recent IDC survey shows security spending remains a top priority for most organizations."

Burke said the growth in the security business will be primarily fueled by new business initiatives in the areas of identity management and Web services, which companies across the globe are expected to implement.

IDC also believes the future of IT security will be a combination of products and services implemented to work together in order to provide an organization's network with complete protection.

This becomes more important as major security threats continue to hound companies.

Quadmedia News Agency

MMS pricing crucial . . .

From page B15

$0.39 for received MMS news alerts, while T-Mobile in the United Kingdom offers it at $31.59 per month for a 10-megabyte allowance to send and receive messages, which translates to about 1,000 typical MMS messages.

In Germany, T-Mobile offers MMS at $0.39 per message sent with a maximum of 30 kilobytes per MMS, while D2 Vodafone also offers it at $0.39 per MMS sent (up to 30Kb) or $0.99 per MMS (over 30Kb).

SFR of France, for its part, offers MMS at $6 per month for an unlimited use.

The study suggested that charging excessive premiums clearly sends wrong signals to potential customers.

"This is particularly significant given that the youth market was the driving force behind the growth of SMS, and the same may well be true for picture messaging," the study said.

The study added that MMS picture messages should be priced at about $0.25 per message.

"At this price the service will be cheap enough to encourage substantial levels of usage in the mass market, and will still achieve very attractive profit margins ($25 revenue per megabyte)," the study said.

The study pointed out that pricing strategies such as free trial periods could also further expedite early take-up of MMS.

"In the longer term, we believe that high messaging revenues will come from substantially larger overall messaging volumes than today, rather than huge price premiums compared to SMS," the study said.

Study says MMS revenues may not meet expectations

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REVENUES from multimedia messaging services or MMS are expected to grow, although these figures will not rise to the level of simple messaging system or SMS, as industry pundits expect them to, a report from market researcher Datamonitor said.

According to Datamonitor, SMS will continue to be the cash cow for most service providers, particularly those operating in Europe and in Asia.

Datamonitor also reported that more data is needed by MMS operators—which are aiming to get about 25 percent to 30 percent of their revenues from MMS in a couple of years—to make the new wireless message sending technology take off the way its predecessor did.

Operators will have to ensure substantial revenue streams from other forms of mobile data over the next few years, Datamonitor said.

As the service implies, MMS allows users to access audio, video, high-quality graphics (images, photos) among others, from their mobile phones. SMS on the other hand allows only text-based data, although being an earlier technology it has been an excellent revenue generator for most operators.

Datamonitor also predicts that SMS revenues in Europe are expected to peak in 2003 and fall year on year as price competition increases and new technologies, including MMS, are expected to emerge.

However, although the MMS market will grow at a four-year compound annual growth rate of 388 percent due to operator push and viral use, in Europe it will still only be worth $4.9 billion by the end of 2006, Datamonitor said.

In Asia, Datamonitor noted that the reduction in the growth of messaging revenues looks "worrying" as mobile content has not yet taken off in most Asian countries, with the exceptions of Japan and South Korea.

However, the fact that there will be a considerable number of e-mail and instant messaging users looks promising, Datamonitor said, as the research firm also noted that consumers using e-mail and/or instant messaging will be higher value users and more likely to contribute revenues from other forms of mobile data; content such as infotainment, multimedia downloads, payments, location-based services and mobile gaming.

In the Philippines meanwhile, while the top two mobile operators have released their respective MMS offerings, an overwhelming majority of the estimated 17 million mobile subscribers in the country continue to heavily use SMS.

Quadmedia News Agency

MMS pricing crucial in boosting uptake

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A STUDY shows that service providers seeking higher pricing for multimedia messaging service (MMS) would stifle uptake of the technology.

The study by UK-based consultancy firm Sound Partners noted that service providers should peg the price of MMS at $0.25 per message, or run the risk of turning off people from using the service.

Unlike text messaging, which has become very popular in Europe and Asia, MMS provides more than messaging. It allows users to send pictures, short videos, music and animation using their handsets.

The study suggested that MMS indeed provides an opportunity for service providers to reap revenues out of the service, which is also the same thing that is happening with text messaging.

Experiences in Japan have shown how picture messaging has surpassed text messaging.

Unfortunately, MMS is still in its infancy in most markets, particularly where there is limited choice of handsets, lack of interconnection between networks (and even in handsets), and lack of applications.

The study also revealed the pricing of various MMS services. The UK-based operator Orange, for instance, offers MMS at $0.63 per message and

MMS/B14

Microsoft-powered smart phone unveiled in RP

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

LOCAL operator Smart Communications on Friday introduced Asia's first Microsoft Windows-powered "smart phone" in the Philippines, making the company the first local operator to introduce a smart phone under its own brand.

Edgardo Bautista, head of business and product development of Smart, said the handset was specifically manufactured by HTC, the contracted manufacturer of Compaq's iPAQ, for Smart.

Reports indicate that UK-based carrier Orange SA was the first operator to launch a Microsoft powered smart phone. AT&T would be the first US-based company offering a Microsoft-powered phone in mid-2003, reports added.

Smart officials declined to say when the new smart phone would be available in the local market, and how many units were expected to be sold in the country.

Bautista, however, said that Smart intends to order units in the "thousands" this year.

Bautista stressed that Smart's smart phone is customized for Smart subscribers who want both personal digital assistant (PDA) and mobile phone technologies married into a single device.

Thus, the operator is expecting "high-end" users to comprise the market for this product.

Officials again declined to disclose the retail price, but said that the unit would be sold with an attachable camera, cradle and a charger.

During a press briefing, Smart officials stressed that the smart phone is being pushed as a "mobile personal computer."

The smart phone runs on Microsoft Windows that readily integrates with desktop Windows applications such as Microsoft Outlook, Bautista said.

Bautista was particularly excited with the built-in browser that allows users to connect readily to the MSN mobile website, Microsoft's MSN Messenger and WAP-based services, including Smart's WAP portal.

Bautista also noted that Microsoft's ActiveSync software has been integrated into the smart phone for easy data replication and synchronization between a desktop PC and the mobile phone. In short, users could configure the smart phone's software to allow them to update their calendars on the fly.

The smart phone also comes with a Windows Media Player that plays both music and video formats.

Bautista said that Smart is currently working on bringing more games and business applications to the smart phone, dubbed the Smart Amazing Phone, to boost sales of the handset.

"Soon, the Microsoft Mobile Information Server (MMIS) would make the smart phone as the wireless office PC, providing a total corporate turnkey solution to mobile access anytime, anywhere," he added.

Bautista said that MMIS would give users the ability to send and receive e-mail, synchronize their mobile calendar with their desktops wirelessly and even perform device and software management tasks using the smart phone.

iSCSI approval widens market for storage area networks

By Gerry Plaza

STORAGE area networks can now be built using low-cost and largely available Ethernet networks or the Internet. This is after the Internet Engineering Task Force approved the highly anticipated iSCSI standard, which potentially allows multiple computers access to a pool of storage systems, either through an existing Ethernet or Internet protocol.

SCSI or Small Computer System Interface has long been regarded as the standard for connecting hard drives to computers. iSCSI takes these connections further, permitting computers to access data or applications from high-end storage devices located in disparate areas in the network.

Previously, the lone accepted standard for networked storage access is Fibre Channel, a protocol that offers high-speed, robust links to a wide array of storage systems.

However, Fibre Channel requires a separate network to be built for storage access, leading organizations to incur more costs. In contrast, iSCSI works with existing networks, thus holding the promise of offering ease of use and cost benefits.

While a number of companies have shipped products that were based on an iSCSI draft, the approval of the standard would further advance market interest and wider adoption among storage players and customers. This gives companies the proverbial go-signal in offering iSCSI solutions, and for end-users, the necessary confidence in pushing the standard forward.

IBM and Cisco Systems have started to push iSCSI in its storage area network offerings, while others are expected to ride in the bandwagon with more products within the year.

The main market for the standard are small- and medium-sized businesses, particularly those currently using Ethernet or IP for their corporate networks. The well-established Fibre Channel protocol, meanwhile, would remain the standard of choice among large enterprises.

Experts see iSCSI as the driving force for more organizations to utilize storage area networks and move away from direct attached storage. This would be achieved without having to build a new infrastructure from the ground up.

Windows-based storage systems are seen to first benefit from iSCSI before it is expected to reach the data center once it proves its reliance as a data access technology. More iSCSI "appliances" are set to flood the market for small and mid-sized organizations which demand a high-performance storage network without the need to create a new "storage systems department" for it.

The biggest stumbling block for organizations to embrace iSCSI, particularly for data centers, is the speed of Ethernet itself, with Gigabit Ethernet still in the stage of transformation. Experts agree that for iSCSI to reach the data center, Ethernet networks would have moved beyond the 10-gigabit barrier.

Despite this, however, the approval of the iSCSI standard is seen as a turning point in the data and storage management space. Users now have the option to go beyond their attached storage to seek pools of storage devices available anywhere, promoting efficient, reliable, robust and ubiquitous data access.

Ex-hacker Mitnick's website hacked

WASHINGTON—Kevin Mitnick, a one-time cult figure computer hacker, had the tables turned on him when his own site was attacked by a hacker who exploited a little-known vulnerability, his company said.

Mitnick, who served nearly five years in prison for stealing corporate computer secrets and was until recently prohibited from using computers under probation terms, took the attack in stride.

Mitnick said his site has attracted a number of attacks coming from almost every country since he launched the firm.

"I suppose if you were a young hacker and wanted to prove your skills, this is the place to go," Mitnick said in a statement on his site. "It reminds me of the movie 'The Gunfighter.'"

Mitnick, a cult figure among some hackers, allegedly broke into computer systems of Motorola, Sun Microsystems, Qualcomm and others until he was apprehended in 1995.

AFP

Macapagal pitches RP . . .

From page B16

sourcing as one of the niches which the body intends to push as part of the national e-services strategy of the Philippines.

Noting the country's competitive advantage over other Asian countries, Ms Macapagal stressed that the Philippines is in a position to capture the business process outsourcing market.

"The outsourcing of call center operations in the Philippines is just the tip of the iceberg," Ms Macapagal added.

Business process outsourcing encompasses services that range from financial and accounting work to customer service.

Ms Macapagal said that her goal this year is to help boost the business process outsourcing opportunities for the country.

"Our goal is to provide the highest value proposition for the Philippines. My administration has been working to meet the requirements of this specific industry," she added.

"But I need your help," Ms Macapagal stressed, as she addressed chief executives of various IT companies. "The Philippines is and will continue to be a good place to do business. Let's be allies."

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Macapagal pitches RP as outsourcing hub

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday urged chief executives of multinational companies based in the Philippines to convince their mother firms to outsource some of their business processes from the country.

"I'm sure that you're now concerned with your operations here in the Philippines. But I'm also sure that you could improve your bottom line if your companies decide to outsource some of your business processes here in our country," said Ms Macapagal during the opening ceremonies of the e-Services exhibit at the World Trade Center.

Ms Macapagal added that it would cost companies one-third less of what they spend in other Asian countries if they were to channel some of their business processes into the Philippines.

The Information Technology and E-commerce Council (ITECC), the highest policymaking body in information and communications technology, has identified business process out-

MACAPAGAL/B15

Adding pictures to comments in MS Excel

By Jerry Liao

ASIDE FROM HAVING text inside a cell comment, you can also add pictures into it. Here's how :

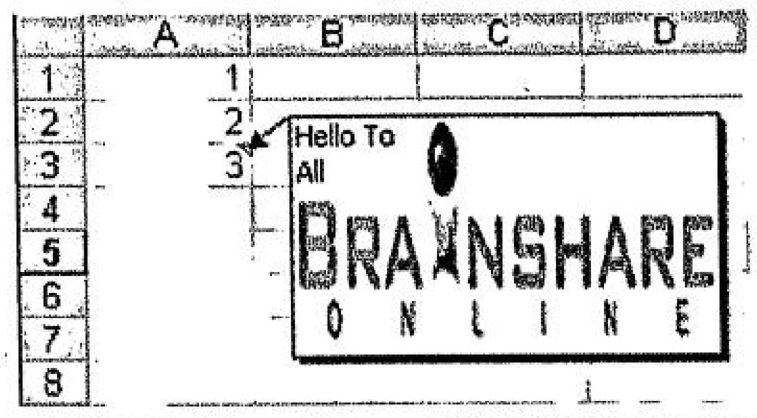
(1) Open your MS Excel workbook.

(2) Select a cell that contains a Comment.

(3) Right-click your mouse button, the shortcut menu will be displayed. Select Show Comment.

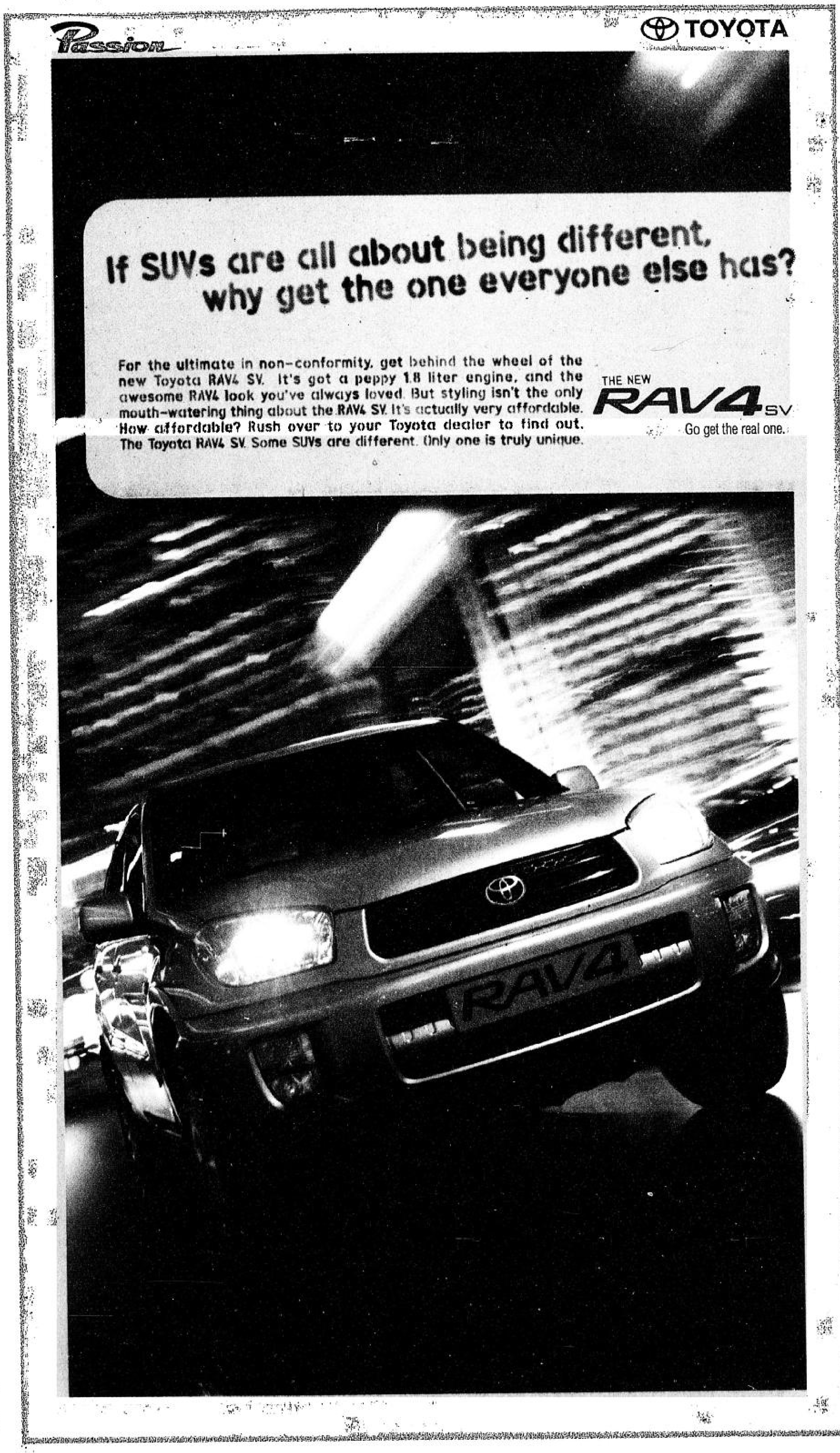
(4) Move your mouse to the edge of the comment until the cursor changes into a four-arrow then click your left mouse button.

(5) Right-click your mouse button, select Format Comment.



(6) Select the Color and Lines tab. Under Fill, choose Fill Effects.

(7) Select the Picture tab, then click on Select Picture. Select a picture. Click OK.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Use of non-PC devices seen rising in 2003

NEW devices and technologies in computing will emerge this year and will provide end-users new computing tools beyond the ubiquitous personal computer which has been the nexus of computing in both the home and in business.

According to research firm Meta Group, there will be a "wave of change that companies must anticipate that will reshape the end-user environment during the next few years" starting this year throughout 2007.

Meta Group predicted that this wave is brought about by strategic moves made by technology giants Intel Corp. and Microsoft, as well as the emergence of personal digital devices (PDAs), tablet PCs and smart phones, among others, with the respective software technology needed to run these slew of non-desktop PC devices.

On the vendor side, chipmaker Intel which has recently launched a new microchip technology encompassing mobile, desktop and server product lines and Microsoft's "Longhorn" project—the next version of Windows XP—set for launch, are seen as having huge impacts on the future of end-user computing.

"The common theme behind many of these changes is an effort to improve the end-user experience—to make it more productive and cheaper," says Meta Group analyst Jack Gold.

Gold further added that "for instance, Intel's Centrino platform (formerly Banias) will improve the notebook computing experience—resulting in notebooks that are lighter, run cooler and have longer battery life. We are moving from a computing model that is very invasive."

And while desktop PC prices are not necessarily going up, the impression that the end-user computing environment is stagnant with companies sticking to desktop PCs to power their operations—at least in the next few years—is incorrect, Meta Group said.

Specifically on the business front, new devices could usher in new levels of productivity and that companies should be able to anticipate the wave of change so as not to incur more costs and lower productivity.

However, as there are advantages to new computing paradigms, there are also risks in adapting to new productivity tools, Meta Group said.

The research firm said that new devices inevitably pose new challenges in the areas of system security, technical support and end-user policies among others. An immediate threat seen by the group is the emergence of new viruses which seek to gain entry into networked systems through the connected non-PC systems. *Quadmedia News Agency*

Singapore online sex fiend gets 23 years, 24 lashes

SINGAPORE—A 26-year-old man who used the Internet to lure young girls for sex, raping three of them, was sentenced to 23 years in jail and 24 strokes of the cane

Raymond Pok had posed as a heartbroken teenager, posting messages on the Teen Channel chat room, the Straits Times said. He offered money for young girls willing to be his girlfriend.

Three girls aged between 13 and 14 succumbed to his enticements and were raped, the report said. He filmed some of the sexual acts and used them to blackmail the victims into seeing him again.

"His use of trickery and threats show him to be a man who understands the psyche of young girls quite well," Justice Tay Yong Kwang said. "He first used money to lure the young girls out and then resorted to have them as his virtual sex slaves."

He also infected one girl with a sexually transmitted disease, Chlamydia, which can cause infertility, the report said. *AFP*

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BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Use the exchange rate to industrialize

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

AS OF this writing, the exchange rate hovers around P54 per US dollar. Tensions of a likely war by the United States on Iraq have been pushing the peso downwards. Business is worried by the trend, but the seeming blight may really be a blessing. The exchange rate may help the Philippines industrialize.

Protecting industry

Governments often protect local industries from imports, to give the former time to grow. This is called import-substituting industrialization: replace imports with products made locally.

One way is to slap a limit or quota on how much of a good can be imported, and these are called "quantity restrictions" or QRs. Another means is to impose taxes on imports, tariffs.

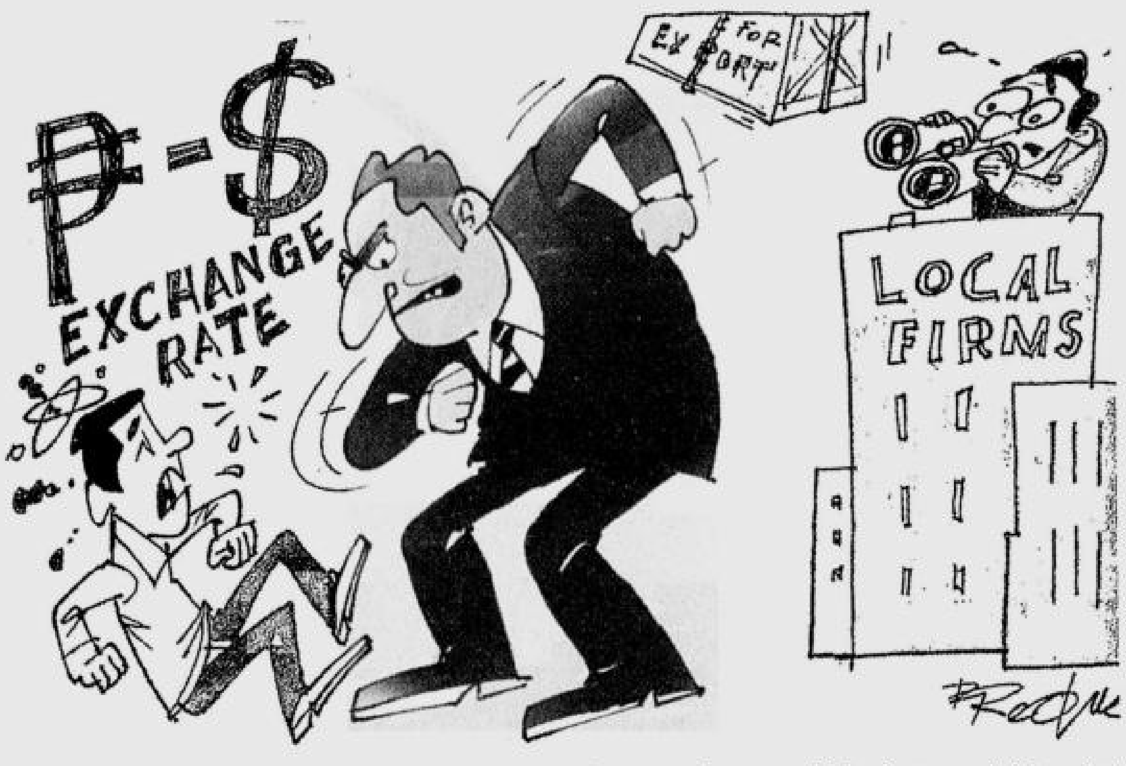
The alternative is to use the exchange rate to protect ALL industries from imports. This can also be called export-driven industrialization, as a high rate makes it more attractive to export. As experience shows, quotas and tariffs end up backfiring.

Favor a few, push the many

For example, suppose the exchange rate is P50 per US dollar. Then the government protects the appliance industry by imposing tariffs on imported appliances. Given the added cost, less appliances are imported. This results in less Filipino demand for dollars needed for importing appliances.

With less demand for dollars, the peso price of the US dollar—the exchange rate—falls to say, P 47. The peso is then artificially propped up or overvalued.

Cheaper dollars make all other imports cheaper, and they compete with local products. Hence, while the appliance industry is protected, all others, from canned goods to computers to construction equipment, are penalized.



The lower exchange rate also makes exporting less profitable, so exports fall as well. So the unintended result is that protecting one sector stunts all the rest. A uniform tariff for all imports would be better and fairer. But even that would leave the peso overvalued, punishing exporters and overseas Filipino workers. It would be best to use the exchange rate as a uniform shield to protect the whole economy.

Stunted machine industries

Sadly, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the Philippines chose tariffs and quotas to protect industries that churned out consumer goods. That made dollars artificially cheaper or the peso overvalued.

Studies found that the peso was overvalued by 20-30 percent in the '70s and '80s.

Philippine imports of agricultural products and capital goods (machines) thus became cheaper. That stunted agriculture; neither could local machine industries grow. With imported factory machines artificially cheap, firms turned to production techniques that used machines more than labor. That is, by favoring capital-heavy production, it stopped industries from absorbing much la-

USE/C3

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Best employers in tough times

MAPping THE FUTURE

Susan Grace Manalo

WAR clouds from the Middle East are about to pour and pour hard. Our worst fears of a global economic slowdown grinding to a complete halt is a headline away.

At a time when our concerns about terror attacks, budget deficits, flat growth, electioneering, and further peso depreciation come second only to the unimaginable prospects of war, does it matter at all that there are companies being singled-out for being the Best Employers in Asia?

The answer is a resounding yes. Now more than ever do we need the best to lead the way. The lessons from the Best Employers in Asia, as gleaned from the results of the first survey in 2001-2002, are the very same ones that will help businesses navigate the terrain of the most challenging of times yet to come.

These lessons are quite simple and straightforward. The organizations that have earned the honor of being best employers are those who are committed to achieving business results through people. They walk their talk. They make time to genuinely listen and understand what drives employees to excel, to rise above mediocrity. They are then able to create and sustain a culture where employees are engaged and committed to stay with the company, even when the going gets tough.

Not surprisingly, employees of best employers say great things about their leaders and the people practices they foster. These same employees say in no uncertain terms that they are most willing to serve and are empowered to contribute their significant share in ensuring the viability of the enterprise.

While twelve of the Top 20 Best Employers in Asia were multinational companies, among them, Ritz Carlton, Agilent Technologies, Federal Express, Tricon, AMD, Navion Software Development, Ford Lio Ho Motor, Intel, Four Seasons, Hormel Foods, Hewlett Packard & Western Digital, local companies equally stood out.

The uniqueness of indigenous companies—Elegant Textile (IND), Jollibee Foods (PHI) Tenaga Nasional (MAL), H&CB (KOR) & Crown Motors (HK)—stem from the practice of modern management techniques while winning the hearts and minds of employees with values, policies and practices that are family-oriented.

When the "war for talent" escalates into a war where survival becomes a rarity, the organizations that are better prepared and equipped for the future are those most likely to remain standing when the dust settles. They plan well and paint vivid descriptions of their desired futures and how individual employees fit into these pictures.

Hard times have a way of testing relationships. The best employers are able to demonstrate that strong relationships begin with the individual employee's sense of pride and purpose in being part of an organization that makes a great difference in the market place. They feel strongly about the good name and standing their employer enjoys with customers, potential employees, and the wider community. Harmonious relationships and family-like working environments are cited around Asia as reasons for joining and staying with their companies.

These relationships that are leveraged for business results are the same ones companies will harness and rely on when tough decisions brought about by tougher times have to be made.

Outside of fair pay, recognition, and benefits programs, employees of best employers value the transparency attendant to open communication and direct access to leaders.

CEOs of companies adjudged as best employers share information with employees more regularly and more frequently than other companies.

With the uncertainties of current times felt more palpably than ever, the clarity by which business situation, direction, goals and strategy are communicated to employees will prepare them for the eventuality of tougher times ahead.

Best employers couple this with clear expectations about roles, team and individual contribution, and the result is a workforce that will passionately perform to deliver as expected.

The key lessons from the best employers can be summed up in two words: engagement and alignment.

Employees are engaged when they say great things about the companies they belong to, when they stay even when the going gets tough, and when they actually serve with a passion the very ends for which the company exists.

There is alignment when the organization's people strategy, programs and practices are in

MAPPING/ C4

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Foreigners race to sell cars in tough Japan market

TOKYO—On the surface, the Japanese seem to love anything foreign: they buy the most Louis Vuitton bags in the world, watch the most Hollywood movies outside America and sprinkle their ads with English slogans.

But cars have always been an anomaly. In a country where 16 out of 17 cars are Japanese, foreign makers are facing an uphill battle to hold onto a miniscule market share that hasn't grown in over six years.

Even as makers announce new partnerships to increase sales, as BMW did this week with Japan's Yanase & Co, industry executives concede it will be difficult to raise their six percent slice of the domestic pie.

"Japan is a unique market," says Tsutomu Umeno, president of Volkswagen Japan.

"Local brands are extremely competitive, especially since Japan has strict fuel-efficiency rules. Besides, there's no autobahn on which to enjoy driving powerful European cars," he said.

The market share held by foreign carmakers has not grown since sales peaked in 1996—and that was only after the Japanese government intervened with deregulation and the yen's sharp rise made imports cheaper.

Domestic rivals also enjoy a web of distribution networks and a reputation for building low-priced, top-quality cars, all of which has made life that much more difficult for foreign brands in Japan.

And with the economy falling on hard times, business is getting even tougher.

Although foreign brands command a third of the market for full-sized passenger cars, that segment is shrinking fast as consumers drive off with cheaper and smaller cars.

Shifting gears

With the odds stacked against them, foreign makers are now shifting gears to get back in the race.

In the past few months they have signed deals to open new showrooms, announced plans to diversify their product lines and began offering flexible payment options to entice young buyers.

For BMW the solution is to improve its sales technique.

This week, the German carmaker said it would put Yanase, Japan's oldest distributor of imported cars, in charge of eight sales outlets in Tokyo, with more to come later.

"We're good at making cars but we're by no means the best at retailing," BMW Japan President Ludwig Willisch said.

That deal comes just two months after a similar pact between Yanase and Audi, a unit of Volkswagen AG .

Audi, which two years ago had only five exclusive showrooms, boosted the number of dealerships to 76 last year through its deal with Yanase, helping sales grow by 44 percent in 2002.

Volkswagen, Japan's top foreign seller with a 23 percent share of the imported car market, will also open several new dealerships this year as it targets a three percent rise in sales to 62,000 units.

Jaguar, the luxury arm of Ford Motor Co , will add at least 10 showrooms in 2003 to bring the total to over 100, while renovating three-quarters of existing dealerships.

Another issue is pricing, which foreign carmakers are reluctant to lower because they sell so few cars.

Jaguar is trying to overcome this hurdle by offering more financing options, such as payments in small instalments, to lure younger drivers to its line of cars, including the X-type 2.0V6, the first Jaguar to cost less than four million yen ($33,000).

Build and they will come

Just as rapidly, foreign brands are rolling out new cars to fill their showrooms, and many plan to use this autumn's Tokyo Motor Show to stir interest in fresh offerings.

In January alone, DaimlerChrysler introduced the CLK55 AMG luxury coupe, an addition to its Mercedes-Benz line, General Motors unveiled its Saab 9-3 sports sedan, and Audi introduced the RS6 sedan and TT Roadster 1.8T.

Audi is also planning at least three more

FOREIGNERS/ C3

Yuchengco hosts merry mix of politics, business

HIGH PROFILE political and business leaders came together early this year to grace the traditional party hosted by Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco.

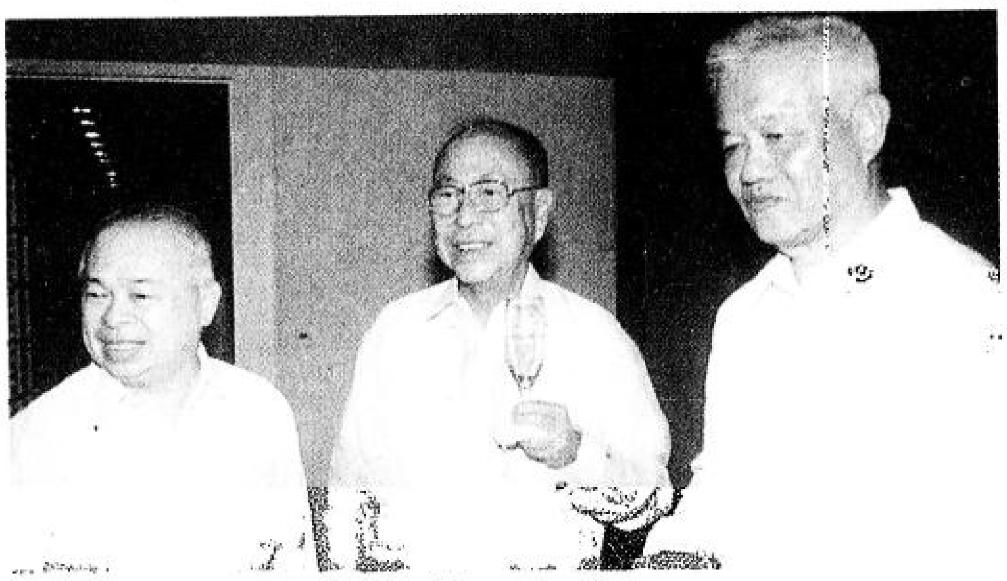
Yuchengco's New Year's Party held at the 47th floor of the Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza was marked by good food, better wine and the best in conversation.

Among the political luminaries seen gracing the occasion were Senators Edgardo J. Angara, Loren Legarda, Franklin Drilon, Juan Flavier and former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

Business leaders, on the other hand, included Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II, Cesar EA Virata and Finance Secretary Jose Camacho.

YUCHENGCO welcomes Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr.

JOVITO Salonga with Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho



YUCHENGCO with Cesar EA Virata and Senator Juan Flavier

SENATORS Juan Flavier and Loren Legarda with Vice President Teofisto Guingona

SENATOR Franklin Drilon with Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II

Use the exchange rate . . .

From page C1

bor. Jobs became less available.

As poverty expert Dr. Arsenio Balisacan put it, protectionism "inadvertently stunted the development of the rural sector by creating a bias towards large-scale, capital-intensive manufacturing industries located in urban areas, especially Metro Manila."

Ruining agri, small firms

Industries were hard hit: the small rural enterprises, the local machinery industries, and the export industries which suffered from the low exchange rate. Those who gained from protectionism were the rich families that owned big factories around Metro Manila. Those who lost were the firms that manufactured machines, small enterprises, the rural sector, exporters— and workers who couldn't find jobs.

All told, wealth leaked from the countryside to Metro Manila, from small rural enterprises to large urban firms, from agriculture to protected industries, from workers to factory owners.

In contrast, Japan and the East Asian tiger economies followed an export-led path to industrialization. They did not overvalue their currencies and at times even undervalued them.

Left behind by Thailand

Compare the Philippines' record with a country having a similar resource profile, Thailand. The big difference was that Thailand followed the path of exports.

As a nation industrializes, the agricultural sector shrinks in importance. For the Philippines, it accounted for 26 percent of GDP in 1960, falling to 20 percent in 1997. That was slow progress. In contrast, Thailand's share of agriculture in GDP was 40 percent in 1960, plunging to just 11 percent in 1997.

It's not surprising then that poverty has not gone down much. One way to view this is to use the "$1 a day" poverty line to compare nations. In 1975, a large 36 percent of Filipinos had incomes below that level. By 1995, the ratio slid to 26 percent.

Contrast that with the progress in Thailand. By 1975, only eight percent lived on less than $1 a day. That plunged further to less than one percent in 1995.

Filipino firms should thus look for opportunities, for the exchange rate will likely remain at high levels. Why not go into exports? Why not offer services to the outsourcing market? *(Comments to darroyo@philonline.com)*

Foreigners race . . .

From page C2

models this year.

Volkswagen's new models come in all sizes. Its pipeline includes the Lupo GTI, Touareg sport utility and New Beetle Cabriolet, following last month's launch of the Golf R32.

"Looking at the last few years, it seems that if you introduce new models, customers will come," Jaguar Japan President David Blume said recently.

Jaguar will begin selling its new XJ, the world's first car with an aluminium body, this summer.

Still some say the biggest hurdle for Japanese buyers is psychological. Many Japanese, for instance, associate a big Mercedes sedan with gangsters.

"There's always a debate about striking a subtle balance between presenting the cars as different but not too foreign," says Anthony Millington, head of the European Automobile Manufacturers Association in Tokyo.

He says carmakers even fuss over whether to use foreigners or Japanese as models in catalogues.

"You have to make sure Japanese consumers are not uncomfortable being associated with a foreign car," he says. Reuters

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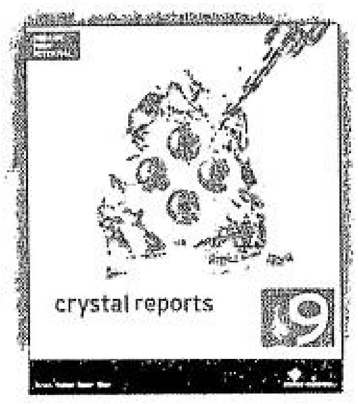

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Arroyo to run for PSE board

ALICIA Rita Morales Arroyo, president of RCBC Securities, is running for reelection as director of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

Arroyo has been actively serving as co-chair of the Strategic Development Committee and the Audit Committee of the PSE since she won the highest number of votes for a broker-director during the very first demutualized elections of the exchange last year.

She has helped organize investor awareness activities like the PSE's first international and local roadshows and has supported institutionalizing reforms for the development of the exchange and the brokerage industry.

Arroyo is a daughter of the late Manuel Morales, former chair of Equitable Banking Corporation; four-term president of the Bankers' Association of the Philippines and former Monetary Board member.

Aside from her exposure to international banking and finance, Arroyo spent eight years managing the brokerage firm.

She holds an MBA degree, major in finance, marketing and economics from Kellogg, Northwestern University, USA.

A BSBA in accounting graduate of the University of the Philippines, Arroyo is a licensed certified public accountant, securities representative, a certified fixed income representative and investment company representative.

Best . . .

From page C2

sync with and supportive of its goals and strategy.

Business and war are kindred cousins. While we all pray for peace, normalcy, and the continuity of life as we aspire it to be, these trying times call for leaders who can rally their employees, inspire hope, and channel adrenaline borne of fear into creative, productive, meaningful and life-enhancing pursuits. After all, the age-old adage is true - fire is the test of gold, adversity the test of strong men. And strong companies.

Clearly, the lessons we learn from the best employers are replicable not only across companies, industries, markets and geographies. While these are lessons that apply in good times, they are far more relevant in bad.

The Best Employers in Asia Study is a ranking of the region's top employers conducted through interviews and questionnaires with employers, CEOs, and human resource professionals done by Hewitt Associates and Dow Jones publications THe Asian Wall Street Journal and the Far Eastern Economic Review. *(The author is the country manager of Hewitt Associates. For feedback, e-mail mapsec@globenet.com.ph)*

Cows and pigs may prove to be very meaty businesses in the Philippines

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—The recent "pig sale holiday," essentially a boycott by the Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines (Asap), and the hostile reaction of the Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi) to hints it was behind the unchecked importation and smuggling of meat left Renato Tayag Jr. still feeling hopeful.

Tayag, the founding president of the Pampanga Association of Meat Processors (Pampro), the biggest group of medium-sized meat processors in the country, has no reproach for anyone.

What he has, he said, are possible solutions to the woes of the meat industry.

Tayag, also chair of the Pampanga-based meat processing company Mother Earth, said the P80-billion hog industry is "now the greatest cash spinner in an agricultural economy as the Philippines."

The industry, for example, has more backyard (80 percent) than commercial raisers. The industry's need for animal feed also stimulates the local farming sector that produces the rice bran (darak), copra and yellow corn that are abundant in Mindanao.

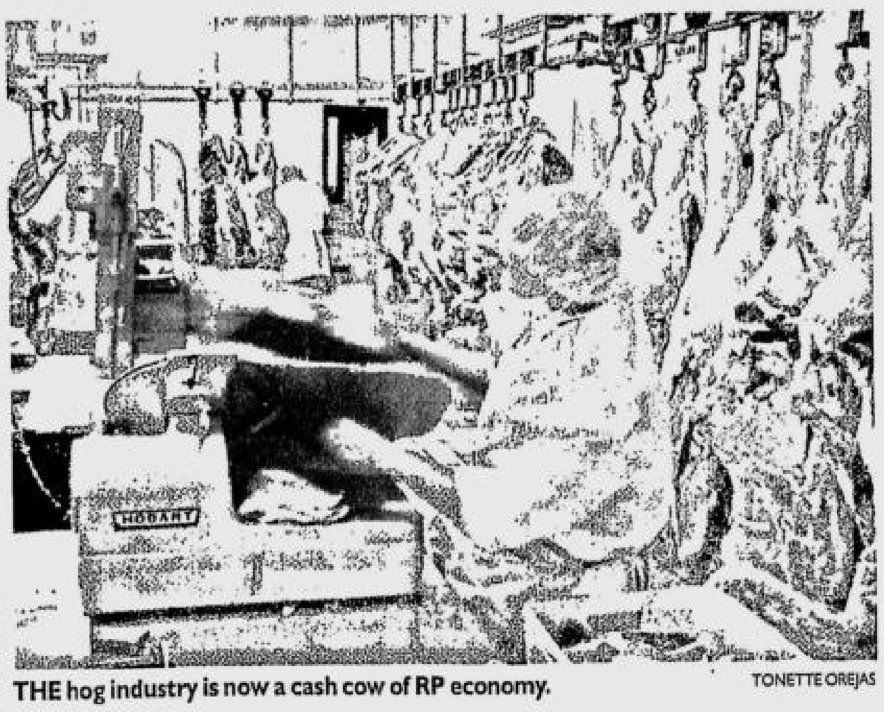
The rest in the chain—businesses engaged in breeding, fattening, slaughtering, cutting, processing and packaging—also pump cash into the economy by creating jobs and, for some, pouring new investments into related ventures.

"There is a great need to integrate the whole chain. There must be no conflict between or among the players because in many ways we could interconnect," Tayag, 54, tells the INQUIRER.

Tayag's proposals are hinged on integration. Hog raisers, planters, feed millers and meat processors could put up shared facilities per region because that is how the players in the food group actually function.

The development in the regions is also a concern of the government through the respective plans of the regional development councils, he said.

The hog-raising sector, for one, could benefit from this scheme because it does not have an abattoir, the cutting and processing facilities for cleaner and more hygienic products.


THE hog industry is now a cash cow of RP economy. TONETTE OREJAS

"The supply mainly goes to the wet market. It stops there. It has not been modernized," Tayag says.

Planters, on the other hand, can join the loop to ensure a steady supply of local feed ingredients. He says the linkage can be done where corn, rice or copra are available like in Central Luzon, Isabela, Pangasinan, Bukidnon, South Cotabato and General Santos City.

Tayag says corn growing should adopt efficient mechanization to ensure that feeds are adequate. Direct arrangements with farmers could help stabilize corn prices.

He says the cost of transporting feeds could also be reduced and profit margins increased. This, he notes, is necessary for feed mills in Central Luzon, which consume 50 percent of yellow corn that is grown mostly in Mindanao.

There can also be "forward integration." In this scheme, hog raisers can organize as a group with its own facilities for slaughtering, cutting, cold storage and packaging. This, he adds, could eliminate the *viajeros* (middlemen).

"Backward integration" by those in the meat processing business entails forging stronger ties with the hog raisers and local livestock and poultry growers to guarantee meat supply. An increase in the local production of carabeef is encouraged.

Tayag says the ultimate aim of integration is to lessen meat importation. The industry, he says, remains viable because in the case of pork, the annual per capita consumption is high at 16 kilograms.

The focus, he explains, is on "linking, on creating a cross-ownership between production and processing. This should be officially encouraged and institutionalized by the government and supported by the private sector."

"Putting the resources together will mean more steps to move the industry forward," he says.

According to him, the industry now has more strengths than weaknesses.

Speaking from experience

Tayag speaks from experience.

His company, a venture of the Tayag, Hipolito and Ocampo families, has implemented most of his proposals.

Mother Earth started in 1984 by producing cassava and the high-protein Ipil-Ipil leaf ingredients for feeds.

In 1989, it went into cattle fattening and breeding. In the same year, it operated an abattoir.

By 1990, it expanded into meat processing, relying on local pork, which was abundant in Central Luzon.

The June 1991 eruptions of Mt. Pinatubo stopped Mother Earth's operations. Although the disaster was hardly over, the 20 employees pushed for the resumption three months later.

But the firm, according to Tayag, changed strategy. While it chose to remain in Pampanga to venture again into fattening, slaughtering and cutting, it also began to tap the market outside the province.

To date, Pampanga has 16 medium-sized meat processing companies. These cater to consumers in the middle class and below.

Through its modern-facilities, including a Triple A abattoir, Mother Earth is producing high-value products sold in major supermarkets in Central Luzon and Metro Manila.

Undertaking first-hand the integration scheme, Mother Earth has teamed up with corn planters through contract growing arrangements. Aurora province shows bright prospects in this venture, Tayag said.

The firm has tied up with the Feed World, a homegrown feed mill with a network of planters. Its new abattoir is a pilot modernization project. Worth P60 million, the abattoir's 40-percent equity came from the government.

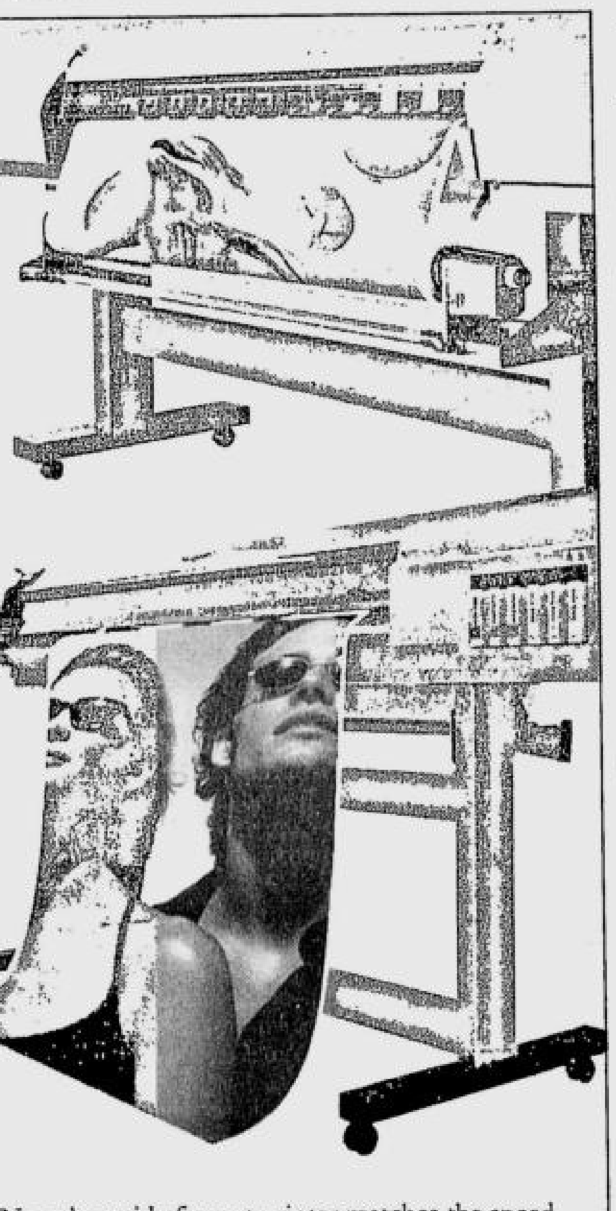
The Jenra supermarkets chain in Pampanga also used the same facility, enabling Mother Earth and the government to recoup the investment.

In between the other tests—the 1997 financial crisis and the scare over the mad cow disease—Mother Earth has grown and now has 100 employees.

Tayag, a business administration graduate of the University of the Philippines, is glad to impart the experience, and attest to the benefits, of integration.

"We could be a model for other regions to replicate and we are willing to share our experience," he says, recalling the days when only the late businessman Gerry Abanez of Batangas went out of his way to teach his company "how to do things."

"The food group deserves the support of everybody. (The integration) is easier said than done but it can be done through the partnership of the government and the private sector," Tayag says.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Bank signs deal on e-Commerce

THE BANK of the Philippine Islands marks another chapter in its online banking history with the introduction of the BPI ExpressLink e-Commerce.

The new facility gives faster, more efficient and cost-effective interaction between trading partners, giving them real-time Internet-based transactions.

BPI and Zuellig Pharma Corp. recently held a signing called

BANK/ C7

GIL Buenaventura, EVP, BPI (left); Peter Dolinsky, president, Sanofi Synthelabo

(From left): MICHAEL Becker, COO of Zuellig Pharma; Reiner Gloor, president and GM of Zuellig Pharma and Xavier Loinaz, president of BPI

(From left): MANUEL Salazar, president, Pascual Laboratories; Paul Gordon and Allan Hizon, BPI; Billie Mayo, BPI; Cesar Aurellano, CFO, Pascual Laboratories; Gerry Verzola, BPI; Dr. Abraham Pascual, chairman, Pascual Laboratories and Edwin Fiest, president, Abbott Laboratories

Business jet market may take years to rebound

CHICAGO—For some corporate executives, it's back to long lines at crowded airports and a bag of pretzels for lunch.

Sales of business jets, once the ultimate status symbols, have cooled with the US economy, and industry watchers say they may not rebound until 2005. The sleek stratospheric board rooms have come to represent corporate greed for some, and for others are simply no longer affordable.

Annual sales of private jets with names like Gulfstream and Lear more than tripled in the economic expansion through the end of the last century. Whether sales of the jets, which can fetch $45 million, ever return to the glory days depends greatly on US economic health, analysts say.

Business jet shipments totaled about $11 billion worldwide in 2002, down about 15 percent from 2001, and are expected to be flat to lower in 2003, Ed Bolen, president of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, told Reuters.

"The biggest single influence is the economy, and when that turns around is anyone's guess," Bolen said, adding that sales are three times higher than six years ago despite the drop.

Most manufacturers look to 2004 or even 2005 before a turn around starts because new business jet orders typically trail a recovery by nine months to a year, with production responding about three months after that, Bolen said.

Sales could drop 40 percent from the peak, said Richard Aboulafia, aerospace analyst at the Virginia-based Teal Group.

"It's obvious that the market is heading down, hopefully it won't head down to where it used to be," he said. "It depends on corporate profits, but assuming the traditional forces are in play, there is no reason we cannot have an upturn by 2006 in terms of production, obviously earlier in terms of orders."

Jet makers grim

The main business jet makers—units of Bombardier Inc., General Dynamic's Corp., Textron Inc., Raytheon Co. and Dassault Aviation—largely have hurt parent-company earnings because of soft demand.

Boeing Co. and Airbus offer modified 737 and A319 airliners as business jets, mainly for world leaders.

Manufacturers concede that 2003 will be challenging and say they would need a crystal ball beyond that. They also have been bit by excess inventory of used jets traded in by customers.

Still, sales of new entry level jets have been good and top-of-the-line planes have been largely unaffected by the weak turn in sales.

"People who buy (high-end jets) are billionaires anyway and they don't care about little things like economic recessions," said Paul Nisbet, an analyst at JSA Research.

Bombardier has introduced four new corporate jet models in the past year. List prices for the jets range from about $6.5 million list for a recently introduced small Learjet 40 to about $44 million for the Global Express top-end jet.

Gulfstream, a General Dynamics unit known for plush, fast and ultralong-range jets, has started building a G150 at about $11 million, as well as its $45 million top-end G550.

Textron's Cessna unit expects as many as eight lean quarters. It has had more interest in introductory jets like the Citation Mustang, listed at about $2.3 million, than for its mid-sized Citation X, which runs about $19 million.

Raytheon, which builds Beech and Hawker business jets, does not expect an uptick in orders for up to 18 months. A rebound after that depends largely on the economy. The new $5 million entry-level Premier 1 and $18 million super mid-sized Hawker Horizon have had better sales than existing models.

Dassault expects the poor economy to hit Falcon business jet sales, which it has come to rely on to offset weak sales of Mirage and Rafale military jets.

Underlying demand

"We are seeing that the companies that have business jets are flying them quite a bit ... that is a good sign in terms of the future," Bolen said. "Companies tend to defer capital expenditures in a slow economy. We have reason to believe there will be strong demand, but we need to see the turnaround."

The Sept. 11 attacks heightened security concerns for some corporations and increased security at airports lengthened waits for passengers, both potential reasons to increase use of business jets that board outside main terminals or airports.

However, corporation's have become more frugal because of the downturn and it may take a long time before they return to the old ways, if they ever do, after the economy recovers.

"At this point, the outlook is very cloudy," said Michael Boyd, an air industry consultant. "Investing in a $20 million to $25 million business jet right now, that kind of money will buy a lot of (commercial) air travel."

Businesses have even turned to low-fare airlines and buying restricted tickets to cut costs, and major US airlines have started experimenting with lower walk-up fares to compete with low-cost carriers for the business travel dollar.

Reuters

FORMER ESTRADA IMPEACH LAWYER

Dissenter makes it to ranks of SEC

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

JESUS Enrique G. Martinez is one government appointee who has no qualms about saying that he openly lobbied to get his current position as commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The corporate lawyer, who was part of the private prosecution team during the Estrada impeachment trial, admits that he has always had a moist eye for the SEC because he felt that he had something to contribute.

"I really applied for the job. When I learned that there was a vacancy, I wrote to the president and told her that I was interested in the position because I felt that it was time for me to serve my country in this capacity," Martinez says in an interview.

But since being appointed to the SEC on March 14 last year, he has been criticized for being a perennial dissenter in the ranks as he is one to take time before making a decision. He is also not afraid to go against the tide and sometimes cast the only dissenting vote among the five members of the Commission en banc.

Martinez, however, explains that he just prefers to take more time before he makes a decision.

"It's only because I like to chew on something a little bit longer, rather than just swallow things whole," he says.

MARTINEZ

Martinez likes to compare himself with Roel Campos, a member of the power SEC of the United States who has built a reputation as a dissenter.

He says that doing the same thing himself makes for some spirited discussions during meetings of the Commission en banc, to say the least.

Throwing in new ideas, he adds, go a long way in coming up better policy decisions.

"I like to think outside the box. I do not just throw away ideas, rather I experiment. I find excitement in thinking different," Martinez says.

Martinez says he relies on his long experience as a corporate lawyer to guide him in making decisions during en banc meetings.

He says his experience gave him at least a feel for what the private sector needs to make the business environment more exciting.

Martinez came to the SEC from private law practice. He is a product of the Silliman University in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, where he earned his Bachelor of Laws degree with distinction.

He was legal counsel for a number of private companies both here and abroad and also taught criminal law in his alma mater.

Martinez was also a former special legal counsel for the Coconut Industry Investment Fund and was on a special assignment with the Presidential Commission on Good Government for coconut levy matters.

After dispensing with these duties, he thought that going to the SEC was the next logical step so that he could combine what he learned from both the government and the private sector.

He says he is concentrating efforts on helping expand the local capital market.

"It is the duty of the SEC to excite the capital market by allowing innovations to flourish, even if it means coming up with new rules," he says.

"Rules and laws are not static, they change to go along with developments in the business environment," he adds.

Martinez, thus, spends a lot of time drafting concept papers to help the SEC in serving the public.

His view is that government institutions like the SEC should not overregulate, but rather be a valuable source of support to foster an environment that is conducive to business and investments.

Among others, he has proposed that churches, religious institutions and small Mom and Pop businesses to be exempt from some annual reportorial requirements.

Doing so will enable the SEC to concentrate on companies with public interest, such as publicly-listed firms, he says.

Martinez has also proposed that the SEC reexamine the concept of having so-called independent directors sit on the board of corporations.

"I suggested that we have a pool of qualified people who could sit on these corporations as independent directors. There should be a qualification method," he says.

Martinez is not so naive to think that all of his ideas would come to fruition, or even get past being concept papers.

He, however, says that he finds satisfaction in at least being a trigger to make people, including his fellow Commissioners, think about something new.

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People, Events & Products

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THE G IN DINAGYANG

Intensity Globe hits Iloilo

GLOBE Telecom, the country's leader in digital telecommunications participated in Iloilo's Dinagyang festival opening with a motorcade around the city and the Intensity G sales blitz showcasing Globe Handyphone last Jan 24. The regional salvo was created to celebrate the Globe network's increasing capacity and coverage in key markets nationwide.

Globe Prepaid's now famous "July" flew into town to join the party and cheer the crowds as he led the motorcade that toured the city. Iloilo gave July the warmest of welcomes. Clearly, the Ilonggos wanted to be with July. Ubiquitous white balloons emblazoned with the G logo sent a clear signal to Iloilo – Globe was intent on deepening connections. The Globe entourage led by July traveled along the major avenues and streets of Iloilo City, with the motorcade ending in the heart of the University of San Agustin campus. Wherever the youth are, that's where you'll find Globe.

Globe's intensity G brought to Iloilo a wide range of Globe mobile phone products, notably, the chart-busting Globe Hi-memory Sim, which features a 300-phonebook memory, storage of up to 65 messages, and access to my Globe value-added services. Globe also offered new prepaid phonekits and attractive new deals and promotions for Globe postpaid line applications.

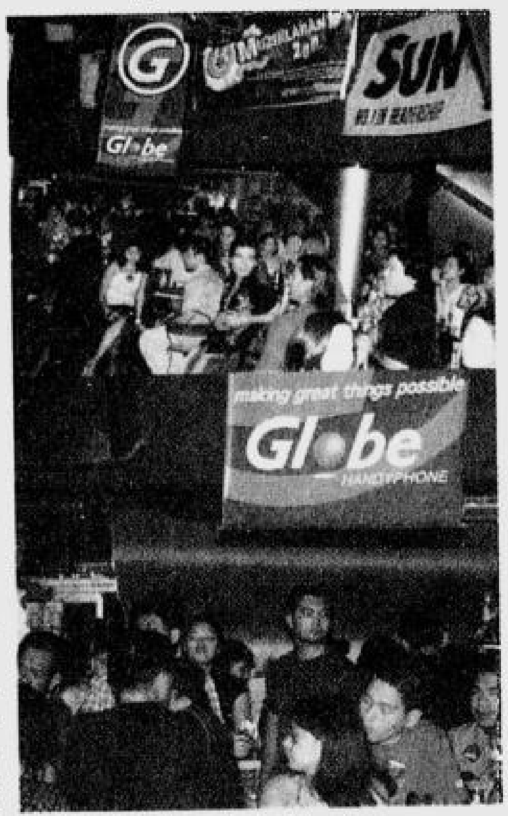
Aside from being in Iloilo's major malls, Globe also brought the "Intensity G" sales blitz to some of the large campuses such as the University of San Agustin campus for a weeklong stint.

"Globe continues to reach out to our customers wherever they are. We do whatever it takes to make sure that Globe network quality is the best it can possibly be. We knew we had to be a part of the Dinagyang, knowing how important it is to our Ilonggo subscribers," said Globe's Reggie de Mesa who is in town for Iloilo's Dinagyang festival.

As night fell, visitors to Iloilo's colorful and highly creative Dinagyang turned up for the Mardi Gras in the city streets of Iloilo, "Intensity G" was there, partying simultaneously at the Vega club where The Next Level Band performed before a highly enthusiastic crowd.

As the Globe sponsored party at Vega Club peaked, lovely Ilongga fashionistas mixed with cool club kids and hipsters, and energy surged through the crowd as "July" surprised everyone with an impromptu performance which added extra excitement and fun to the evening.

"Having fun with our customers wherever they maybe is part and parcel of getting to know them. We need to constantly touch base with our Globe subscribers so we never lose sight of what's most meaningful to them. Intensity G is our way of bringing Globe products and services closer to our most valuable partners – our customers," remarked Globe's Ramon Escaño.



INTENSITY Globe rocks the Vega bar.

'JULY' posing for the camera, just before he enters the Globe party at Vega bar.

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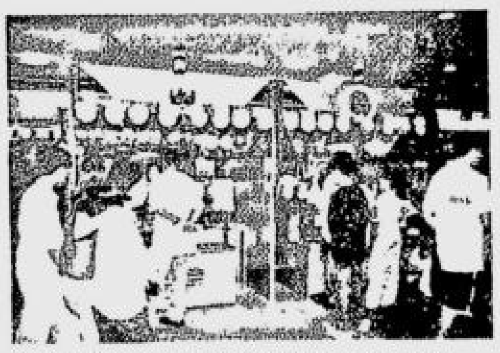
INTENSITY Globe motorcade tours Iloilo City's major avenues and streets.

INTENSITY G
INTENSITY Globe at the Barracks bar.


ILONGGOS check out Globe's mall sales blitz.

GLOBE Prepaid's 'July' sporting an Intensity G hat.

Seagate plays a big role in the creation of 'The Two Towers'

FROM the breathtaking landscapes of Middle-Earth and evil creatures forged entirely through digital animation, to the recording of the music score, sound effects and through post-production – nearly every element of the epic film The Lord of the Rings – The Two Towers was brought to life with the help of Seagate disc drives. Seagate's Cheetah and Barracuda disc drives continue to be recognized as the number 1 choice for major filmmakers and studios around the world.

The Lord of the Rings production team designed an entirely digital universe to bring never-before-seen special effects to the big screen. The team also invested in a historical first in live-action filmmaking: a massive database that has stored every single frame shot in the making of The Lord of the Rings in a digital library that can instantly access, analyze and cross-reference any single item appearing in the film. This means that every element in the trilogy can be subject to digital manipulation, from landscapes to mood lighting to hobbits on horses.

"As the established industry standard in audio/visual work, Seagate's Barracuda and Cheetah disc drives are the trusted drives of choice for our Avid film-editing systems," said Mark Ordesky, executive producer of "The Lord of the Rings" and president of Fine Line Features. "They perform smoothly and deliver the performance we need even when used for the most intensive video storage applications."

The film's music score was recorded digitally at London's world-famous Abbey Road Studios. A live orchestra was captured onto 48 simultaneous tracks all on Seagate Cheetah disc drives within a Studio Network Solutions SAN system designed specifically for audio/video professionals.

"The Studio Network Solutions system using the Cheetah drives gave us a worry-free performance during the Abbey Road sessions with no tracking or time errors as can unfortunately be the case with other systems not optimized for these environments," said David Gleeson, associate music producer for The Lord of the Rings. "Because there are so many elements and complexities in recording a full orchestra, it is critically important that the SAN and computer recording system function correctly the first time. The SNS system combined with Seagate drives deserves high marks and praise for performing perfectly during the sessions and are certainly ideal for even the most challenging recording projects at Abbey Road."

For more information about Seagate and its products, visit www.seagate.com.

INTRODUCING FDT

Shown in photo is Dr. David Gosiengfiao, a Harvard-trained eye specialist with his newly-acquired Frequency Doubling Technology (FDT) machine and a glaucoma patient. The most advanced visual field instrument, the FDT could detect glaucoma far earlier than possible with currently available technology. Early detection is very important in order to prevent blindness, said Dr. Gosiengfiao who holds clinic at the St. Luke's Medical Center and Makati Medical Plaza. He advised those who have a family history of glaucoma, near-sighted and far-sighted people, people over 40, people with vascular disorders such as hypertension and people on certain medications such as anti depressants to undergo FDT tests at least once a year. For more information regarding FDT call tel. 750-2177.

MENTOS COOL CHEWS 'COOL PIPOL' PROMO

Mentos Cool Chews, the exciting hot mint-flavored candies in tri-packs known for that distinctive tagline, 'Tatlong Lamig sa Bibig,' recently raffled off cool, cool prizes including a Toyota Echo Verso, Philips Home Theater Systems and Philips Fisio cellphones in the grand national draw of the 'Cool Pipol' promo. Lino Lopez of P. Del Rosario Extension, Cebu City is the lucky winner of the Toyota Echo Verso in the exciting four-month long promo tie-up between Perfetti Van Melle Phils. Inc., makers of Mentos Cool Chews, and the Philippine Basketball Association. The event was graced by by Perfetti Van Melle Phils. Inc. officials led by its general manager Huub Sanders; marketing manager Aileen Serrano and brand manager May Iglesias-Gaza. In photo are Bobby Yan and Angela Velez with Perfetti Van Melle general manager Huub Sanders.

Valentine show in Alabang

THE OMARR V. Balilla School for Pop Singing and the May Caroline Talent Management Center, in cooperation with the Royale Care Giver Institute, present "A Taste of A Black and a Diva", a Valentine show featuring Tom Smith and Aira Joaquin with the Stay Tuned Band of Itoy Ramiro and Tricia Natividad, tonight at 7:30 at Studio 1, 3rd level of the Festival Supermall, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Special guests include Apple, Fastforward, and Honey Gabatin. Tickets are available at Studio 1, at the Omarr V. Balila School for Pop Singing (807-7871, Ticketext (0919-5730909), or at the Royale Care Giver Institute (telefax 049-4113090).

BITS Clips

Seminar on The Independent Director

THE FINEX committee on corporate governance, in association with the Institute of Corporate Directors, invites you to a seminar on The Independent Director, A Corporate Governance Issue on Feb. 19 from 9 a.m. to noon to be held at Case Room, Fifth Floor, Tower One, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue. Topics include: "Corporate Governance in East Asia: Role of Independent Directors and Audit Committees" by Dr. Jesus P. Estanislao, president, Institute of Corporate Directors; "Regulators' View: Who is an Independent Director?" by lawyer Justina Callangan, director, SEC and Ricardo Lirio, managing director, BSP; and "Directors' View: My Experience as an Independent Director" by Geronimo Estacio, dean, College of Business Administration, University of the East and Ret. CFO, Procter & Gamble (Australia) and Meneleo Carlos, president, RI Chemicals Inc. Seminar Fee is P800 inclusive of snacks and materials.

Adam's brings you to Baguio, Hong Kong

THE PANAGBENGA is now among the top three most colorful, exciting festivals in the country. Hundreds of thousands of tourists will converge in Baguio from Feb. 21 to 23 to enjoy the exuberant colors of the costumed street dancers, the floats and bands parades, the "Carpet of Flowers" similar to those abroad, the best garden competition, the flower bedecked boats in Burnham Lake and the fireworks display. The trip includes the Church Our Lady of Manaoag. From March 7 to 10, Hong Kong will host its 2003 popular flower show and competition. There will be unique displays of exquisite local, mainland China and overseas flowers and plants with the winning competition entries. This is Hong Kong's show window in the horticultural world. Those joining are urged to reserve now by calling Adam's Express Travel at 536-1736/1737/521-1698/1651/1638.

QUALITY EDUCATION IN QUALITY CITY

Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte (right) and AMA Education System chair Amable R. Aguiluz (left) share a light moment during the groudbreaking ceremonies for the AMA Basic Education building that will soon rise along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City. AMA Basic Education, in partnership with the University of California Berkley, introduces innovations in pre-school, elementary and high school through the Great Explorations in Math and Science Programs (Gems), and through an IT-based instructional program that allows introduction to the internet and hands-on student familiarity with new technologies. The school is set to open this June. For inquiries, call 454-5352/454-5345.

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MODERN DAY PIRATES

Earning from others' intellectual creations

UNTIL about seven years ago, people knew only of pirates as robbers in the high seas victimizing seafarers or fishermen. Although the word piracy also means the unauthorized use of copyrighted or patented work, the second definition had never been a part of normal conversation until then.

Piracy now refers mainly to robbers of intellectual property rights. Today, almost all original products can be pirated or faked—from food to medicines to appliances to optical media.

And the costs to original intellectual property holders as well as revenue losses on the part of government have reached the multibillion-peso mark.

These days, too, you don't easily distinguish the fakes from the originals.

Education or training is not a requirement for modern day pirate to succeed in the business. They could earn millions in a matter of minutes.

The problem of piracy of intellectual creations may have been one of the pitfalls of advances in technology. With available technology and the necessary gadgets being manufactured at constantly decreasing prices, piracy of intellectual property has been easy.

And in a system where money talks, it's easy to conceal the illegal tracks. This has made protecting intellectual property rights more difficult for the real owners.

Of all kinds of counterfeit business, it's the optical disc piracy that's perhaps the easiest to do, and the most lucrative. It also best exemplifies the negative side of technology-aided development. From 1996-2000 alone, lost sales due to piracy in the entertainment media totaled P54.8 billion in the Philippines. This is in addition to the loss of 9,416 jobs in the software industry alone from 1998-2000.

Industry sources say almost half the sales in the theatrical, video, cable TV and music industry is from pirated media. This represents about P7.2 billion in lost income for talents in the entertainment industry.

What sets pirates apart?

Like any other criminal groups, they maintain a network of contacts and a pool of resources. Like a syndicate, they use money to move around, concealing their tracks from the authorities or paying off front liners of government enforcement agencies to leave them to their business.

This has been recorded in the IPR Protection Update (IPU) on IPR protection in the Philippines prepared by a group funded by the US government.

As much as possible, however, the pirates prefer to do their thing quietly. Unlike traditional criminals or syndicates, they are basically harmless. They don't maintain private armies to defend themselves from the legitimate authorities. They even look more like victims when caught in a raid.

Welcomed by the masses

And in a developing country like the Philippines, they are welcomed by majority of the cash-strapped consumers. The most important sign of their acceptability to society: their products sell, and sell better than the originals. They are in fact considered as allies of the poor—an economic leveler—because they make things affordable to all.

Now it's not only the rich who could afford computer software or video or digital compact discs. Everybody can have them right from the streets, public markets and even shopping centers at dirt-cheap prices.

How do they do it? Previous media accounts traced their origins from Hong Kong where original audio/video and software copies are bought from insiders of Hollywood's distributing companies in Hong Kong. Called "molder," the master copies are then brought to Malaysia, one of the world's audio and video piracy havens, where mass production is done via replicating machines that could churn out 21,000 discs in an hour. Some of these are then shipped into the Philippines via "tubes" or stacks of 50-60 discs through the airports and piers.

About four years ago, most of the pirated products sold here were foreign films. Starting 1999, piracy syndicates, forced out of Malaysia, China and Korea, began migrating to the Philippines where they allegedly saw a wider elbow room to conduct their illicit operations. The replicating machines are brought into the country as parts which are freely importable under the Tariff Code. It is said that the disassembled parts are labeled as "plastic injection moulding equipment" which fall under the classification of materials used by companies that fabricate moulds for plastics and dyes.

LOST sales due to piracy in the entertainment media reach billions of pesos.

Incentives outweigh risks

The government has been running after them in earnest. But the pirates' incentives to do their illegal business far outweigh the risks of being caught. The Philippine police has no power to arrest the pirates and confiscate pirated items. They can only reprimand. It's the Videogram Regulatory Board (VRB) that has the authority to order an inspection or raid of suspected pirates' hideout and only upon issuance of an arrest warrant or inspection order could the police execute the order, in the company of a VRB representative.

Meanwhile, the present penalty to offenders is very light. Those caught are required to pay a fine of only P100,000 and face the possibility of being jailed for three months to one year. Worse, the offense is bailable and appealable.

IPR holders are also sometimes discouraged from pursuing tedious and expensive legal battles. And even the government is complaining. It is common practice for cases against IPR violators to be dropped by complainants sometimes without informing the government enforcement agencies. Not wanting to agonize over the long wait for justice to grind, the parties usually enter into an amicable settlement.

Pending bills

Congress has stepped into the problem of giving more teeth to local anti-piracy laws and enforcement powers. In the Senate are three pending bills, consolidated from an original eight, which gives the VRB and the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) more powers of enforcement. It also expands the VRB budget from P25 million to P50 million.

In the House also is a pending Optical Media Bill that seeks to stop piracy of movies, songs, computer software and other such marketable contents. It also seeks to regulate the "replication, manufacture and distribution of optical media in all forms."

It even fixes greater sanctions for offenders with fines ranging from P500,000 to P3 million for various offenses and concomitant imprisonment of from three to nine years.

Local organizations of artists and industries dependent on intellectual creation have also merged into an umbrella organization whose main objective is to protect and defend their IP rights. Called the IP Coalition, they are now closely working with the government in mapping out strategies to better face their common enemy: the optical media pirates.

With the concerted effort of the victims and government, these present-day pirates may once again be erased from the public's memory.

Bank signs deal . . .

From page C4

"Suppliers Agreement of BPI ExpressLink eCommerce Facility" at the BPI head office in Makati.

The facility supports billing and collection processes between suppliers and customers.

The signing was led by BPI president Xavier Loinaz and executive vice president Gil Buenaventura and Zuellig Pharma president Reiner Gloor and chief operating officer Michael Becker.

ANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS & ZUELLIG PHARMA CORPORATION
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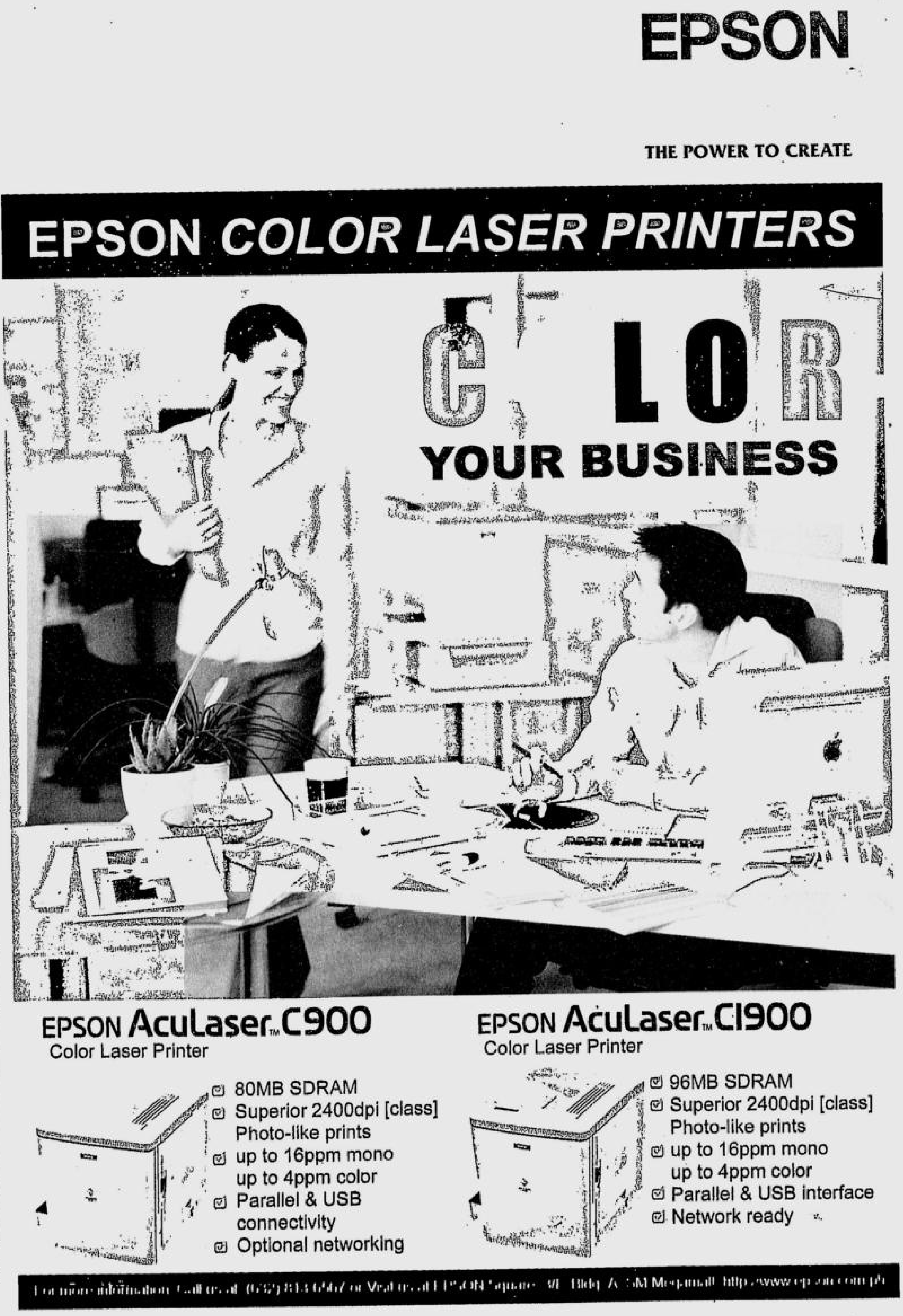
FINALIZING the deal are (from left) Gil Buenaventura, EVP, BPI; Xavier Loinaz, president, BPI: Reiner Gloor, president and GM, Zuellig Pharma and Mike Becker, COO, Zuellig Pharma

(From left): EDWIN Fiest, president, Abbott Laboratories; Reiner Gloor, president and GM, Zuellig Pharma; Mike Becker, COO, Zuellig Pharma; Dr. Abraham Pascual, chairman, Pascual Laboratories; and Xavier Loinaz, president, BPI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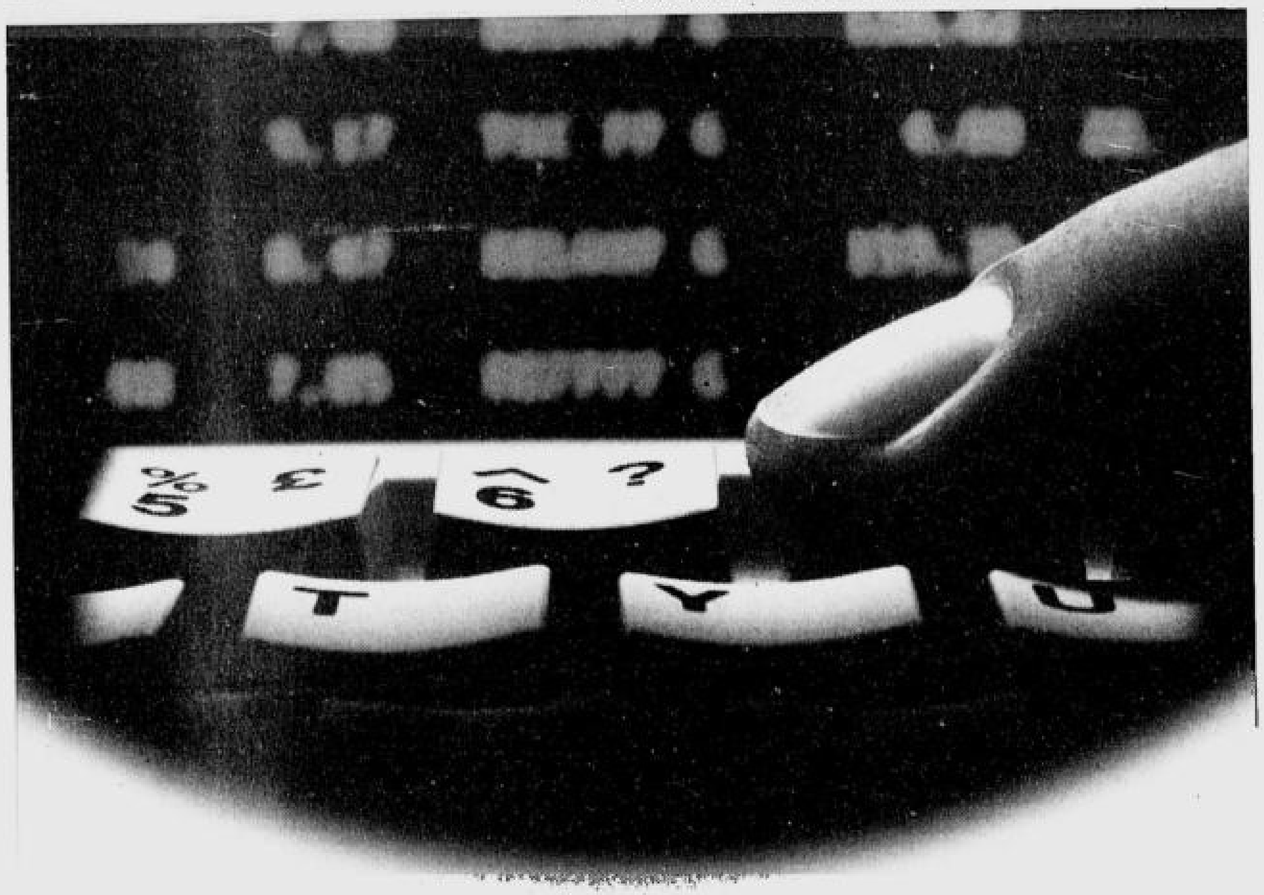
US firms in China on Silk Road at last

NEW YORK—US companies, after years of investing good money in China, have finally struck gold as profits from their efforts there are now offsetting weak economies elsewhere in the world.

China has turned from the perpetual market of tomorrow into a profitable here-and-now marketplace in the past few years. In fact, during the current earnings reporting season, profits from China helped boost companies such as Eastman Kodak, Yum! Brands Inc. and Intel Corp.

"The profits foreign companies generated in China have contributed significantly to their bottom lines as they have faced weakness in North America, Japan and Europe." Nicholas Lardy, senior fellow at thinktank Brookings Institution in Washington, said. "China is standing alone as the center of rapid economic growth." In a survey last September, the Beijing-based American Chamber of Commerce found that nearly two-thirds of 200 American companies doing business in China were profitable.

Surveys for the past three years have consistently shown that American companies are mostly profitable or, in the case of start-ups, on plan toward becoming so, said Chris Murck, chair at AmCham China. *Reuters*



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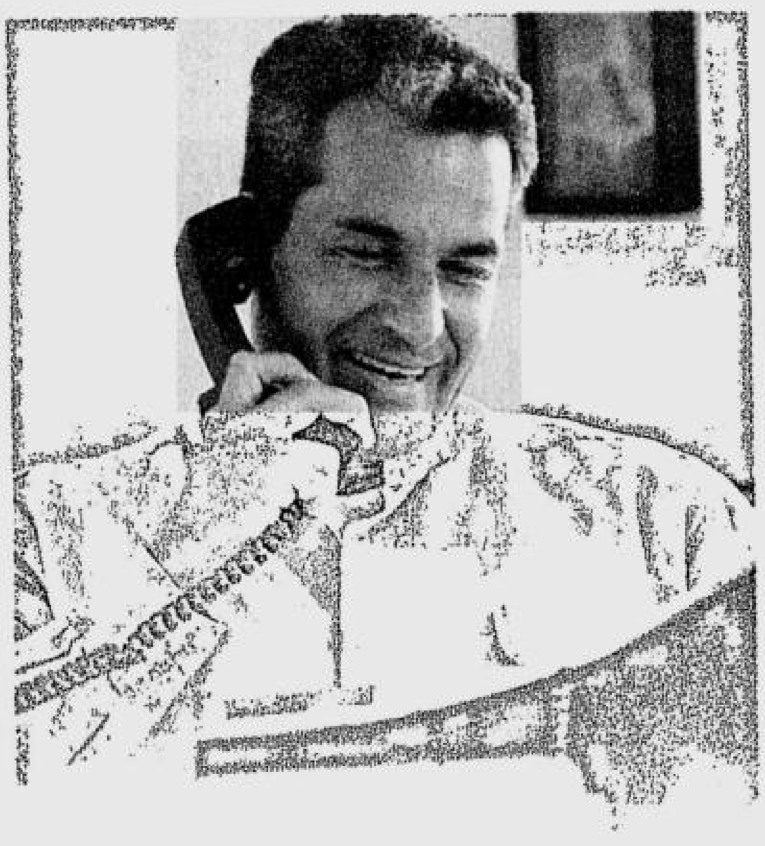

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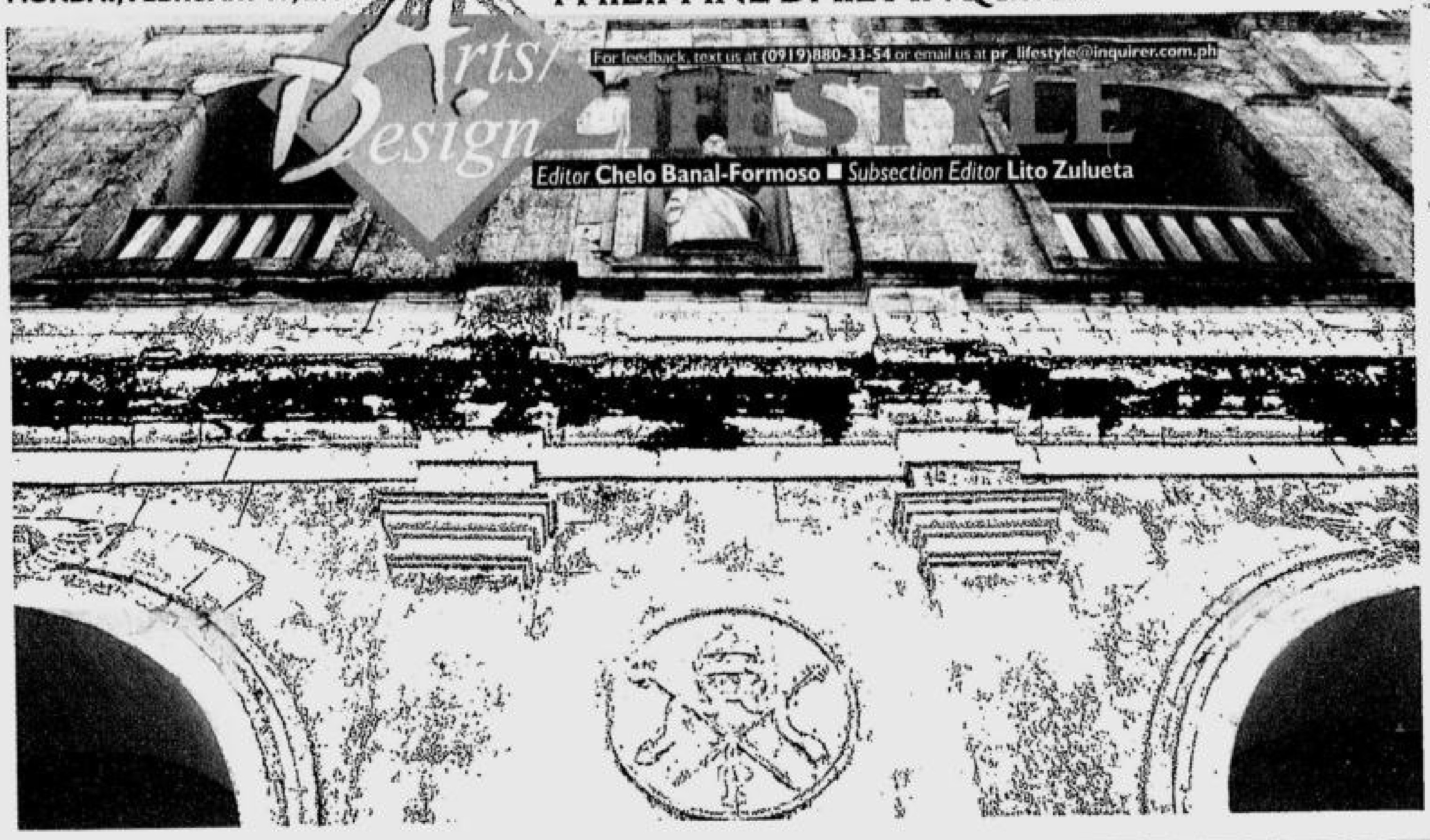

SIDE view of Loboc church

P29!
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Church takes steps to secure its 'wealth'

By Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Joan Bondoc

ALTHOUGH the relationship between the people of Bohol and leaders of the Catholic Church during 300 years of Spanish rule had been uneasy, resulting in at least two historic uprisings, there is no denying that the spread of Catholicism also produced much of what makes the province proud and draws tourists both local and foreign.

Almost every town of the island that was the first to forge "diplomatic ties" with Spain —through the blood compact between Miguel Lopez de Legazpi and Datu Sikatuna in 1565—boasts of a centuries-old church. The edifice is a cultural treasure by itself not only because of age but also because of its architecture.

It is made even more precious by what it holds within its walls. Valuable antiques in the form of religious statues and icons, intricate *retablos*, richly detailed paintings on walls and ceilings, and every inch of space available, sometimes.

Many icons and images are doubly prized because of reports of miracles they have performed.

Unfortunately, as in many other old churches in the Philippines, Bohol's religious monuments are being stripped of many of their priceless possessions, or its architecture, hopelessly reconfigured because of well-meaning but sometimes misguided efforts to "improve" or "modernize," or simply lack of appreciation for their value and those things they hold inside their walls.

Locals report, for instance, that almost every inch of the walls— even pillars—of the churches of Dauis and Loboc used to be covered in colorful paintings of various biblical events. Although the works of art were added to the churches much later than the original construction, they had become so much a part of the historic buildings that discerning people mourn their loss even now.

They were also priceless examples of indigenous art used in the service of religion. The walls have been basically stripped and whitewashed and, in the case of Loboc, painted over in a bright—and distracting—blue and yellow.

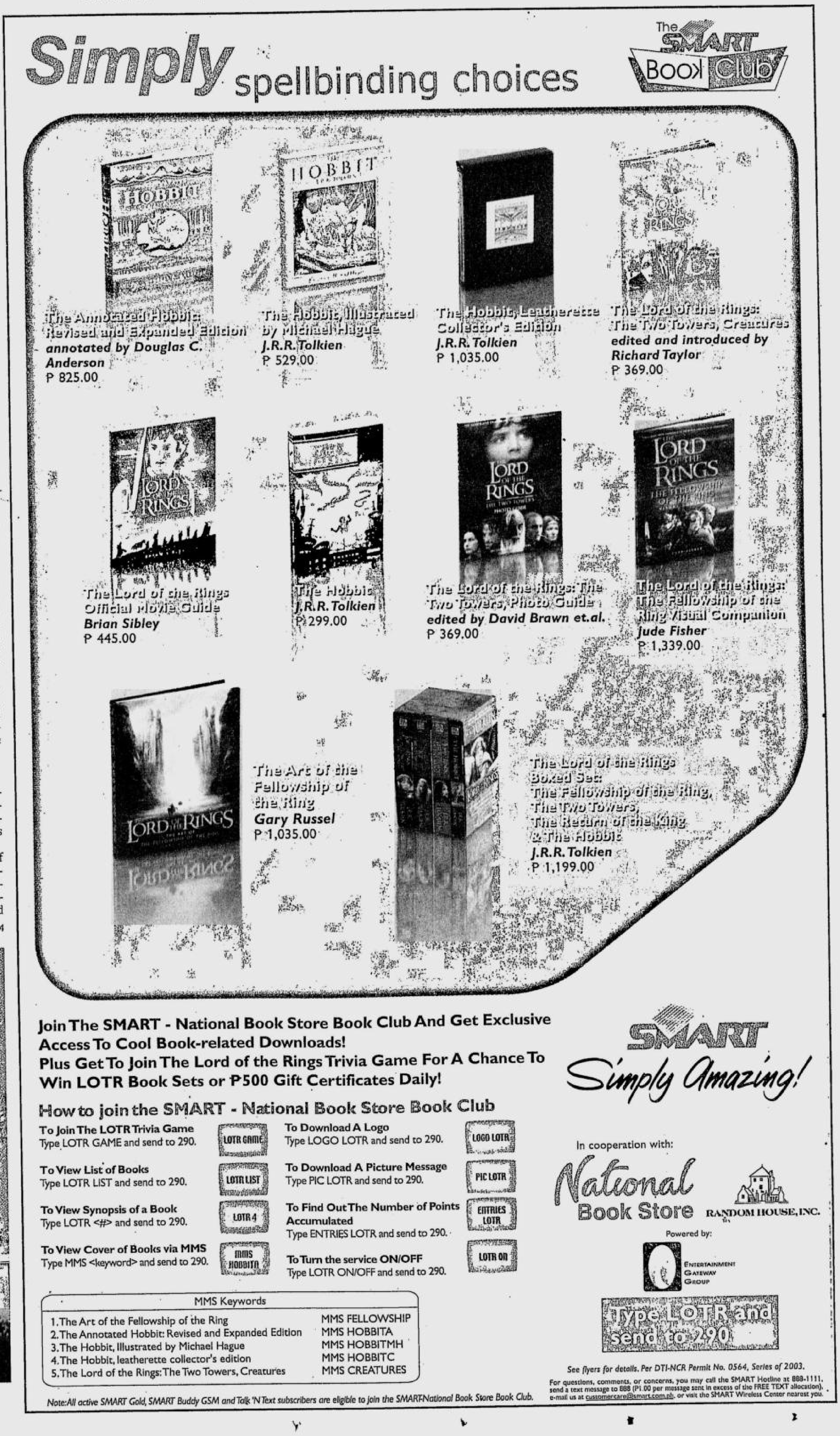
Vulnerable

Of course, churches, which keep themselves basically accessible to the faithful almost 24 hours a day, have also been easy targets for felons who see in their contents assets that can be easily converted into cash.

Just recently, the church of Corella, site of Bohol's tarsier sanctuary, was robbed of several pieces of religious antiques. Robbers reportedly had also looted the churches of Baclayon, site of the Blood Compact, Loboc and

CHURCH/ D4

THE DAUIS faithful pay homage to their patroness after Sunday Mass.



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A RARE spot in a degraded metropolis, for residents who are shut off from nature

The concrete menace that is Atienza wants to bulldoze trees to make City Hall contractors fat and full like him

THIS may go the way of Mehan Garden and the Jai-Alai Building, the mayor's cultural legacy to his city.

Cutting Manila's (clean) air supply

SPACED OUT

Augusto F. Villalon

MAYOR Lito Atienza is trying to do to the Arroceros Forest Park what he tried to do to Mehan Garden. He is moving heaven and earth to cover with concrete one of the few open spaces in central Manila.

As they did for Mehan Garden, conservationists are battling to save the open space. They have brought the issue to court.

Picture the endangered Arroceros Forest Park as a 2-hectare forested area in the improbable location of being right at the foot of Quezon Bridge. The Arroceros Forest Park is something to experience.

Against all odds, the Winner Foundation managed to successfully grow an urban forest in what used to be a derelict empty lot in the middle of Manila.

Walk through the park and smell the fresh air, proof that the tree cover cleans the polluted air of Manila. Green areas are, indeed, the lungs of any city. That is the reason the park should stay.

Winner Foundation is committed to nurturing the trees planted in the park until they reach full maturity. Their vision is to develop the park for educational purposes, to introduce different species of trees to Manila residents who are shut off from nature, and to teach the young the value of caring for the environment.

Place for learning

Labels identify each tree. Signs encourage respect for the environment. Plans are to eventually build a lagoon, install bird-watching stations, lay environment-friendly walking paths around the site, and install benches and lights.

Finally there will be an open-air coffee shop where lectures for school children can also be held. It will be a place for learning about nature, an outdoor classroom.

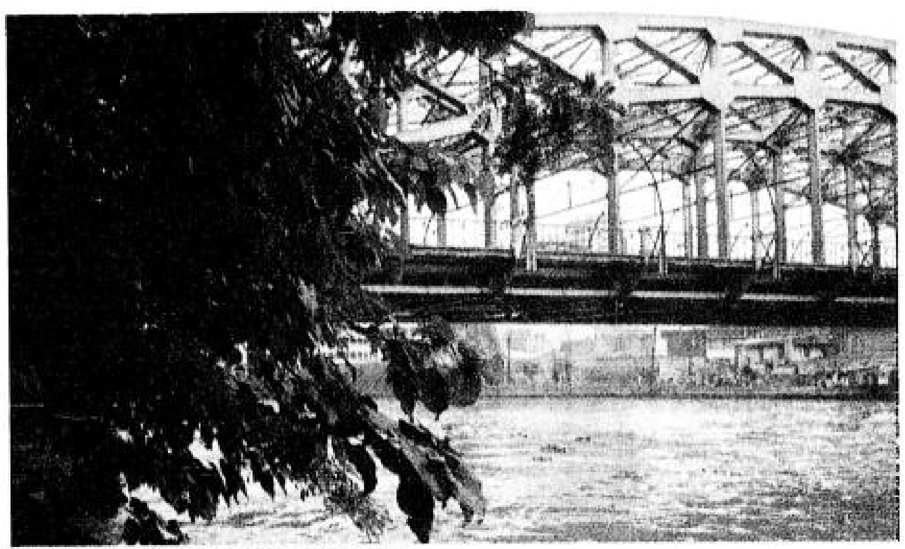
As a first step toward their vision, Winner Foundation has opened the park to the public, thanks to a benefactor who shouldered the cost of additional maintenance personnel.

The park was not allowed to remain open by Atienza, who padlocked the site on its opening day.

Atienza has set his sights on Arroceros and the neighboring Mehan Garden. When he announced his intention to construct the City College of Manila in Mehan Garden, he simultaneously announced plans to construct a facility for teachers in Arroceros.

Remember the public agitation against the City College planned for Mehan Garden? It worked in Atienza's favor.

It smoke-screened the ongoing construction of the Park 'n' Ride building on the Metropolitan Theater end of Mehan Garden. He ignored a cease-and-desist order from the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources and completed the building.



FOREST at the foot of Quezon Bridge

The construction of the City College never pushed through. How could it have, since Mehan Garden is a historic site under the jurisdiction of the National Historical Institute (NHI)? It also is an archaeological site under the jurisdiction of the National Museum.

No agreement

City Hall now claims it has entered into an agreement with the NHI that will allow the construction of a building that respects the historicity and the archaeological significance of the site. Sources say the NHI has not agreed to the construction.

And how can the concrete foundations of a building be laid without disturbing irreplaceable archaeological artifacts known to be buried beneath Mehan Garden (and Arroceros Forest Park as well)?

The Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) strongly maintains its stand that there should absolutely be no construction on either Mehan Garden or Arroceros Forest Park, insisting that the green lungs, which renew Manila air, should remain.

Getting back to Arroceros, at the opening of the park to the public the other week, public-school teachers were joined by other "concerned citizens" who appeared to have been bussed by Atienza. Issued uniformly sized placards with uniform lettering, they tried to reclaim the park for the construction of the teachers' building.

Agitating on the overused class-struggle issue, they declared that the rich shut the poor out of the park. Wouldn't having a teachers' building also shut out both rich and poor from the park?

What nobody realized was that the park was developed for Manileños, and for each and every Filipino who has a stake in his capital city.

For everyone

Regina Paterno, chair of Winner Foundation, stood her ground, explaining the vision of the park to everyone and that it was for everyone. She invited the teachers to walk through and experience the park for themselves.

The lesson that walking through the park brought was that the environment was for everyone and that damage to environment was irreparable. It really is a question of assuring our urban survival, of needing urban lungs to purify the air that we all breathe.

Members of the HCS support the construction of a building to house either the dormitory or office needs of the teachers of Manila. Instead of the Arroceros Forest Park, there are other places in Manila for the building. In fact, there is an adjoining property to the park where the building can be constructed.

To those involved in the Jai-Alai and Mehan Garden issues, the polemics bring about déjà vu. However, the threat to the Arroceros Forest Park strengthens the commitment to make certain Manila retains its green spaces.

So, is it goodbye to the only forest in the city?

E-mail the author at afv@pacific.net.ph

Master builder of texture

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

WAY back in 19-forgotten, the Grade IV pupils of the Gregoria de Jesus Elementary School in Tondo, Manila, were asked to design a lantern.

The competition was won by Raul Piedra, who hailed from San Fernando, Pampanga. He was given a cash prize of P50, a princely amount at the time, especially for a boy, plus an expensive ball pen.

"Until now I treasure the memory of that contest," says Piedra, now 51, abstract expressionist and veteran of many group shows as well as solo exhibits.

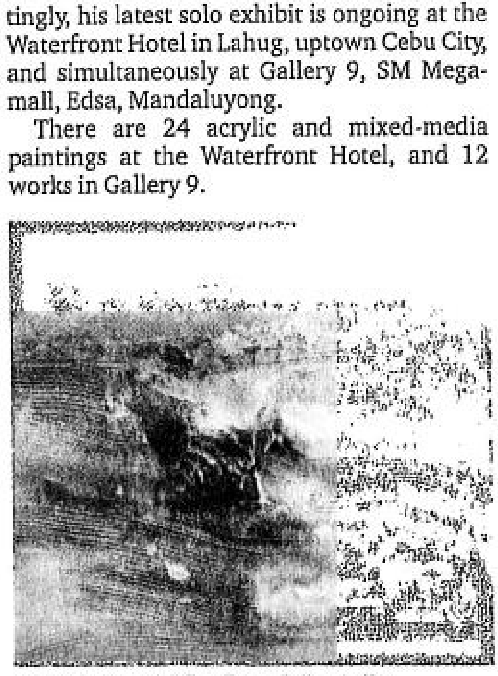
On that day, he decided to become a visual artist.

Piedra went on to design posters at Torres High School, also in Tondo, and to study fine arts at the Philippine Women's University. He married young and fathered seven children.

One of his first commissioned works was a series of prints and small paintings for the sequestered Hotel Mirador in Ermita, Manila.

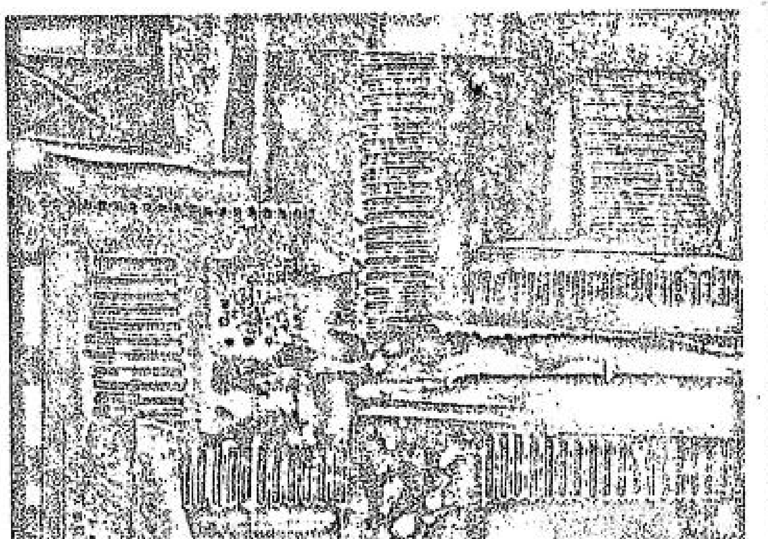
His first one-man show—"as an amateur"—was in 1978 in Lahug, Cebu City. Fittingly, his latest solo exhibit is ongoing at the Waterfront Hotel in Lahug, uptown Cebu City, and simultaneously at Gallery 9, SM Megamall, Edsa, Mandaluyong.

There are 24 acrylic and mixed-media paintings at the Waterfront Hotel, and 12 works in Gallery 9.



"BANTAYAN (The Dawn)," acrylic

The title of Piedra's new shows, 'Oriental Mien,' may reflect his cerebral approach to his art



"CHINATOWN 2," acrylic and mixed media

State of mien

The twin bill runs until Feb. 20. The title, "Oriental Mien," may reflect Piedra's cerebral approach to his art, *mien* (pronounced *meen*) referring to appearance and expression.

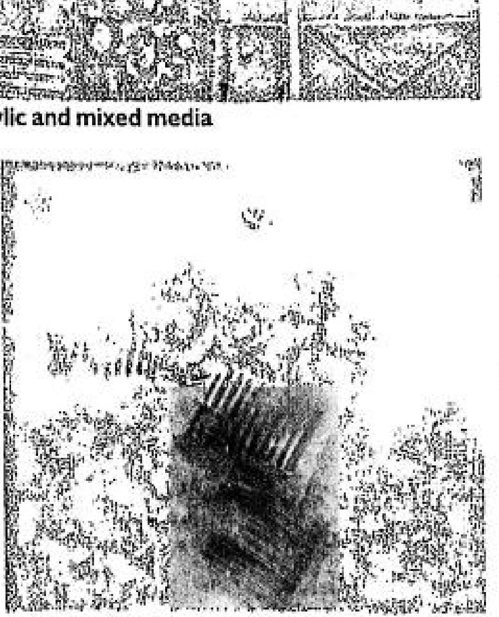
Being expressionist, the paintings are exuberant yet radiate a certain serenity. This is emotion recalled in tranquility, to borrow from the poet's definition of poetry. The meaning may be elusive, or perhaps there is no meaning at all, only a certain mood, a feeling.

The clue may be found in the titles of the paintings, such as "Emotion," "Chinatown I and II," "Birthing Land No. 7" and "Bantayan (The Dawn)."

Bantayan is a picturesque island in northern Cebu, known for its white sand and marine life; so the bold strokes may represent waves and swirling waters. Energy is also found in "Emotion."

On the other hand, the red-tinged Chinatown series, texture-laden, the surface almost three-dimensional, are Piedra's reaction to the colorful Binondo district.

The artist emerges as an Ibsen-like master builder, of texture, that is, with mixed media thrown in with the acrylic paint for good measure.



"BIRTHING Land No. 7," acrylic

"I'm building texture," Piedra says. "I have developed my texture into different forms."

He is also fascinated by the colors of nature, and is inspired by these. His colors are mostly blues, grays, orange, browns, and, lately, reds.

These are subtle colors, as the late art educator Pablo Victoria once put it, colors that are "sonorous but not loud."

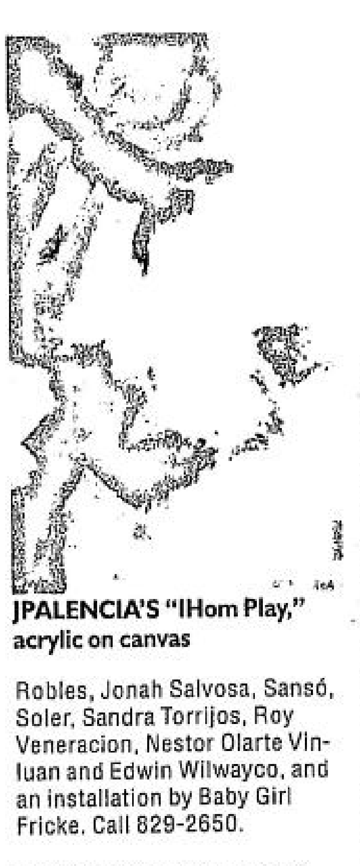
Pascua at West, JPalencia at Pineapple, 'Art for Zen' at Art Room

VISUAL ARTS

JET Pascua will have his latest exhibit, "Parental Guidance," featuring mixed-media works, at the West Gallery, 3/L Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati, on Feb. 20-March 4. One installation piece features a series of 20 small paintings titled "Piano Lessons." Call 752-7028 to -29.

PINEAPPLE, the home furnishing and decorations shop, presents "Play," the newest solo art exhibit of JPalencia. Known for his luminously colored abstract expressionist paintings, JPalencia reworks the ideas of summer. The exhibit is on view at the G/F lobby, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City until Feb. 28. Call (0917) 464-4034.

THE BAHAY Dalangin Foundation presents "Art for Zen," a fund-raising art exhibit at the Art Room, Studio Gallery, ABS-CBN Complex, QC, until Feb. 26. Proceeds of the show will fund outreach projects of the foundation that aims to bring Zen meditation to the poor. The show also wants to draw attention to the spiritual and health benefits of meditation.
On view are art works by Lee Aguinaldo, Ang Kiukok, Angelito Antonio, Ral Arrogante, Tam Austria, Tensie Belle, Allan Cosio, Gig de Pie, Rock Drilon, Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, Egai Talusan Fernandez, Emmanuel Garibay, Hermisanto, Sid Gomez Hildawa, Jeannie Javelosa, Jose Joya, Junyee, Arturo Luz, Willy Magtibay, Malang, Edsel Muscoso, Rene Robles, Jonah Salvosa, Sansó, Soler, Sandra Torrijos, Roy Veneracion, Nestor Olarte Vinluan and Edwin Wilwayco, and an installation by Baby Girl Fricke. Call 829-2650.



JPALENCIA'S "IHom Play," acrylic on canvas

TO STRENGTHEN educational ties between France and the Philippines, a traveling exhibit, "Study in France," is being presented for the third time by the French embassy with EduFrance, an agency under the auspices of the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education. "Study in France" will be launched today at the Ateneo de Manila University. Formal opening ceremonies start at 10 a.m. with French Ambassador Renee Veyret. A lecture-conference with guest speaker Prof. Dominique Dubois will be held. Schedule of exhibits: Feb. 17—Ateneo de Manila University

PASCUA/ D7

Orencio and Despues at Boston

JIM Orencio presents a new series of oils in "Translucence," his ninth solo exhibition at the upper and lower galleries of the Boston Gallery, Feb.22-March 19. Showcased in the exhibit is the Leaves series, paintings of leaves in a pond.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles-based visual artist and architect Marlon Despues holds his first exhibition of digital photographs in the Philippines at the Boston Gallery-Alcove, Feb. 22-Mar. 19.

DESPUES' "Untitled," digital photograph

Orencio explores a technique that manipulates the possibilities of revealing and concealing his canvases' underpainting. Using several glazes and oil paint layers, the artist allows his painting to acquire tactile as well as visual depth.

Despues utilizes photo-editing software to simulate the texture and visual quality of painted surfaces. His works are culled from an average 400-shot a day photographic activity, taken in several places in the country since his arrival last year.

Boston Gallery is at 72-A corner Boston and Lantana Sts., Cubao, QC. Call 722-9205.

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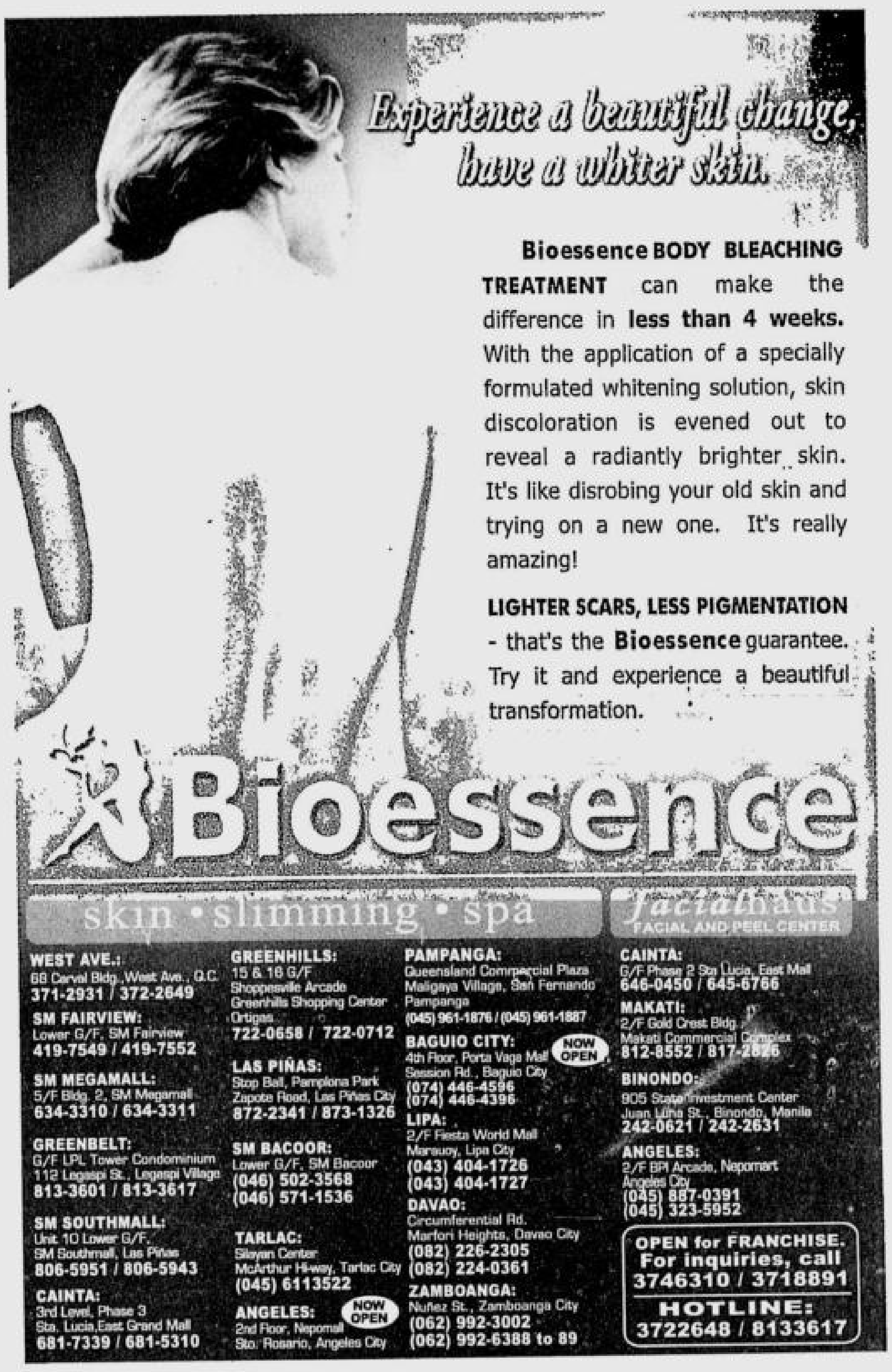

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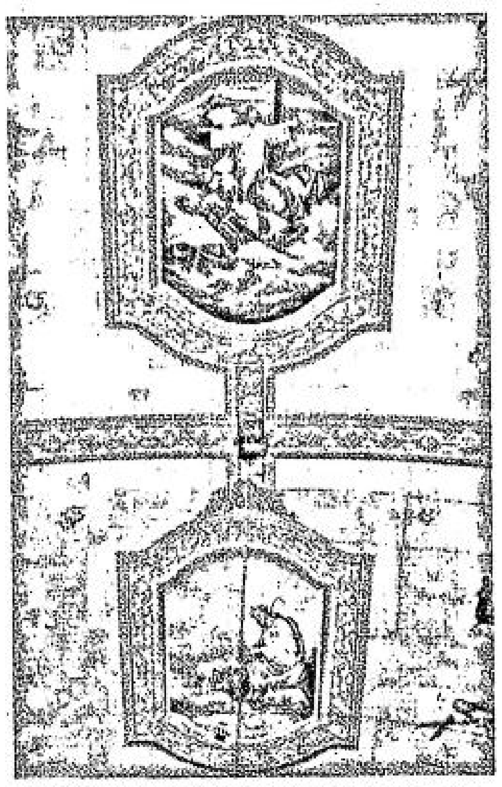
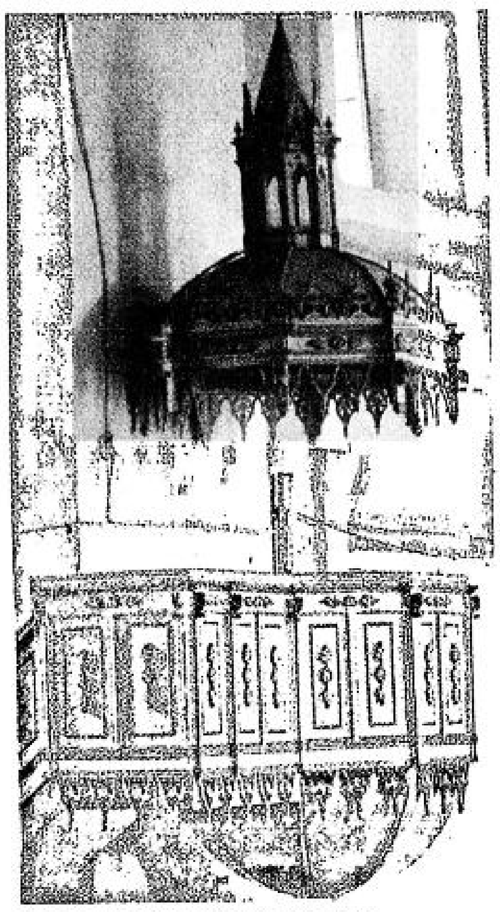
Church takes steps to secure its 'wealth'


PAINTINGS on the ceiling of Loboc church


THE ELABORATE pulpit of Loboc

From page D1

Maribojoc in the last few years.

In other places there have also been instances when parishioners complained that their own priests have stripped their churches of valuable contents for purely monetary reasons.

But now the Philippine Catholic hierarchy has awaken to the fact that its churches and everything they hold are so much a part not only of their own history and tradition but of the country's cultural heritage.

Fr. Milan Ted D. Torralba, chancellor of the Diocese of Tagbilaran and chair of the Diocesan Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, said efforts were being taken for a more systematic and proper preservation and protection of edifices, relics and documents.

The snowballing campaign to protect the Catholic Church's historical and cultural treasures in the Philippines got the first big push in Bohol.

Father Torralba, a native of Bohol, was thrust into his role as spearhead of the church's new consciousness for its historical and cultural heritage, after doing a paper on the state of sacred arts in the Diocese of Tagbilaran for his class in Cannon Law at the seminary.

The priest, who also chairs the Sangguniang Panlalawigan art council, a multisectoral body for the promotion, protection and perpetuation of Bohol's cultural heritage, acknowledged the urgency of the church's initiative. He pointed out that many things associated with the country's history, culture and tradition were church-based.

"Documentation [of church treasures] came very late, and Bohol, like other parts of the country, suffered from collective forgetfulness," the priest said.

Probably realizing Bohol has one of the richest collections of historical and cultural treasures in the country, Bishop Leo Tumulak of Tagbilaran set up in 1995 Father Torralba's diocesan committee. The church body has four sub-committees: sacred architecture, ecclesiastical museum, ecclesiastical archives and heritage tourism.

Teaching appreciation

The Bohol Catholic hierarchy sought to spread its newly found concern for the preservation of the church's heritage by organizing, with the assistance of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), seminars for lay leaders, to give them a little knowledge of—and hopefully a lot of appreciation for—protection and conservation of valuable religious relics and documents (although not soon enough apparently as Father Torralba said; the yellow and blue walls of the Loboc church resulted from a generous donation of cans of paints of those colors from a churchgoer).

In Bohol, plans for renovation, restoration, even construction of a new church has to be approved by the bishop, who will first refer it to Father Torralba's committee for review and recommendation before the diocesan head makes the final decision.

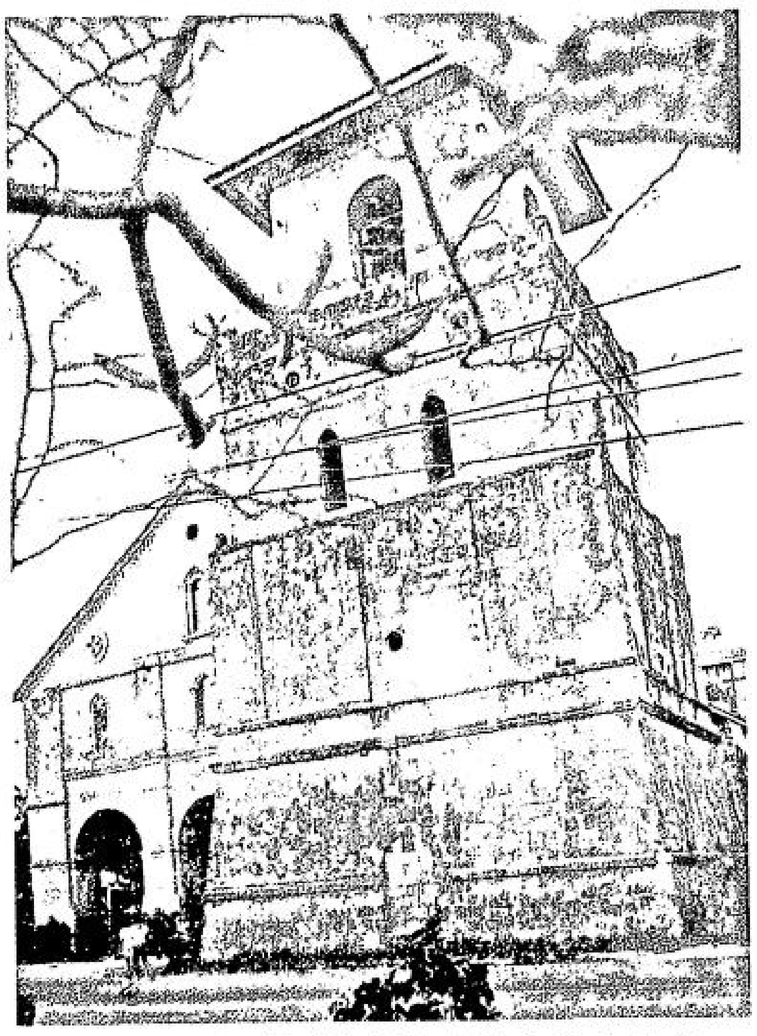
The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has since set up a permanent committee for cultural heritage with Father Torralba as executive director. Bishop Tumulak is chair.

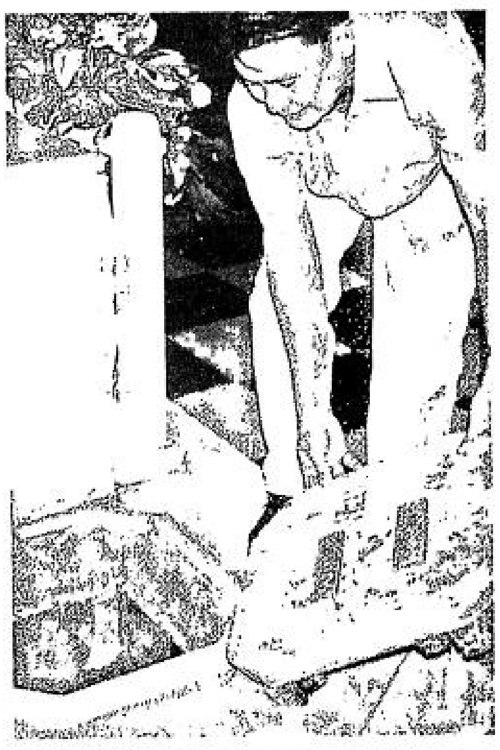
Bolstering the work of the body is becoming a part of the NCCA's Committee on Museum and Sites, making it easier to seek the expert assistance of the commission's member groups. Father Torralba said a priority would be the inventory, documentation and cataloguing of the various churches' possessions.

Hopefully, the growing Church consciousness for the need to protect its historical and cultural wealth would curtail—if not put an end completely—to the loss of valuable property. Perhaps, it would also curb the overzealous do-gooding of some Catholic faithful and make them realize the church is not exactly a place where you can have your favorite colors painted.

FACADE of Dauis church built in 1774 and with the Our Lady of the Assumption as patron saint

ORIGINALLY consecrated to Saint Peter the Apostle, the Loboc church has adopted the Our Lady of Guadalupe as its second patron saint. The image is said to be miraculous, halting the rise of the nearby river just when it reached her feet.


FACADE of Dauis church built in 1774 and with the Our Lady of the Assumption as patron saint


CHITO Vaño of the Bohol Provincial Tourism Office shows a well at the foot of the Dauis church altar, which has provided water to the town during times of shortages. The water is also believed to have healing powers.

THE COLORFUL walls of Loboc church

Wellspring of art for the national community

This exhibit is virtually the entire cultural history of the island-province of Bohol

By Constantino C. Tejero

A MONUMENTAL exhibit is ongoing in the Metropolitan Museum of Manila until Feb. 27. Titled "Tubod: The Arts of Bohol," it takes up the whole of the Tall Galleries and The Catwalk.

"This is one of the most important shows we mounted in 2002," says Met director Ino Manalo.

And, indeed, it was, not only in this museum but arguably in the whole Metro Manila.

Here the show's organizers—the Metropolitan Museum, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Bea Zobel, Department of Tourism, Intramuros Administration, the Provincial Government of Bohol, the Diocese of Tagbilaran, and numerous sponsors—have brought over representative artifacts and artworks of an entire province.

Tubod is Visayan for "spring," and the exhibition's title refers to the wellspring of art and creativity of Bohol as well as the national community.

Divided in eight sections, the show displays over 300 pieces, from pre-Hispanic times to the present, ranging from folk art to high art, from paintings and sculptures to furniture and architecture, stone tools, shell bracelets, *urnas* and *santos*, silver work and ceramics, trade ware and church *retablos*, prayer books and amulets—it is virtually the entire cultural history of that island-province.

It awes the museum-goer with its wholesale display of objects, sometimes bordering on the monumental: a whole *retablo* from an ancient church; a whole boat; parts of a house; paintings and statuary of heroic proportion; the post of a pulpit; a giant *kantoral*.

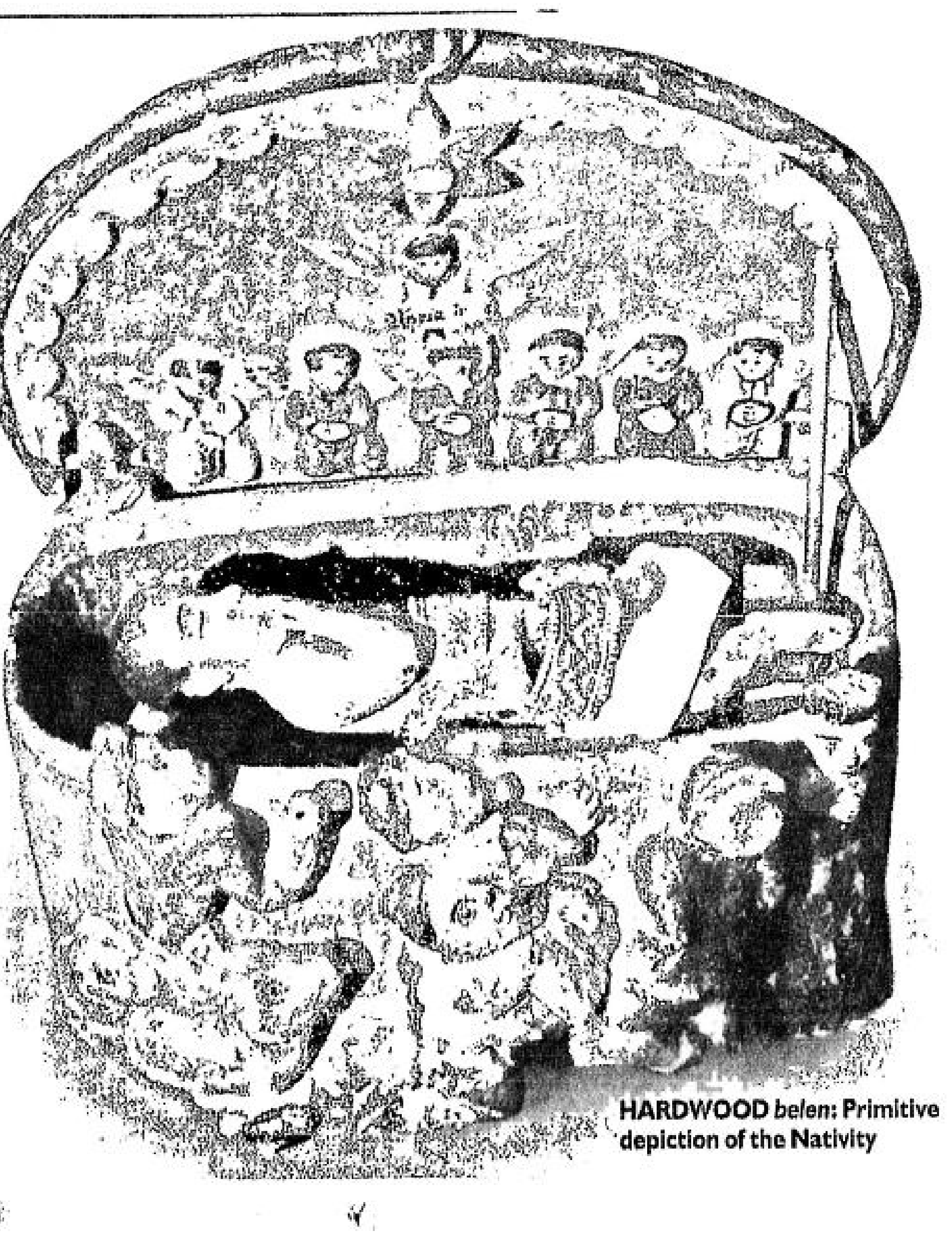
Amalgam of styles

Just before the entrance to the galleries are a *bigiw*, a slender boat with sides of woven bamboo, capable of long-distance voyages; and a *haligi*, an ancient house post dug up on a shore of the shallow water between Panglao island and Tagbilaran (an area said to be the seat of the ancient kingdom of Dapitan, which had relations with Cathay, Ternate, Brunei).

These two objects represent the first section's theme of "Ang Paglayag at Pagtatag" (Sailing forth and Building), which capsulizes the Boholano life's contradiction of venturing out and settling down.

Says the information sheet: "Through the years, Boholanos left the islands, bringing their culture with them. At the same time, people from other islands came to Bohol.

WELLSPRING/ D5


HARDWOOD *belen*: Primitive depiction of the Nativity

Wellspring of art for the national community

From page D4

Eventually, a Bohol style developed."

This is the rich amalgam of styles being showcased progressively through the Tall Galleries and The Catwalk.

Henry Cainglet's impressionistic paintings of ancient church façades and *retablos* are mounted by the entrance. National Artist Napoleon Abueva's realistic group sculpture of the *pacto de sangre* between Señor Lopez de Legazpi and Ka Tunao (the wood-and-fiberglass model for the bronze monument "Sandugo" in Tagbilaran) looms up just after the entrance, instantly transfixing the beholder.

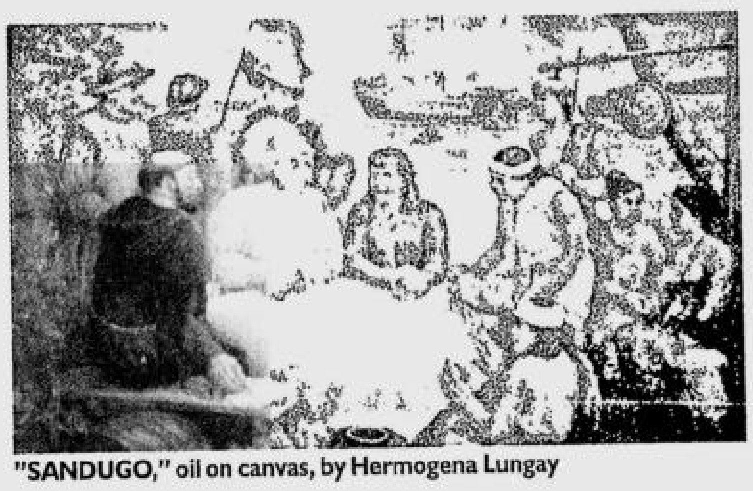
Primitive art abounds, from a gigantic painting of St. Michael dueling with the demon, to the numerous renditions of St. James battling the Moors, from the portraits of distinguished Boholanos staring from the walls, to the religious icons lurking in the corners, including a complete set of the Via Crucis that incorporates the Chocolate Hills as a backdrop of the Passion.

ROCOCO *ramillete* **of polychrome wood, gesso, glass**

From sacred to human

The section called "Singing ng Simbahan" (Church Art) is especially overpowering, as the pieces here are the most ornate and the largest: the *ramilletes*, those rococo altar bouquets of polychrome wood, gesso, gold, seashells, glass medallions; the baroque tail of the demon from a wood sculpture of his battle with Michael the Archangel; the equally baroque Dimiao Retablo and innumerable altarpieces of wood, stone and beaten metal; the exquisitely wrought silver *pasticums* and other church paraphernalia; the lavishly embellished, heavily embroidered vestments of friars.

PART of the model of the Sandugo Monument by National Artist Napoleon Abueva, in wood and fiberglass


"SANDUGO," **oil on canvas, by Hermogena Lungay**

These pieces bear the imprints of the Augustinian Recollects, the Jesuits and the Franciscans. The ostentation is somewhat surprising, considering that those were reformist religious orders.

Manalo smilingly explains the philosophy behind this staggering section: The friars employed artists and artisans to overdecorate church interiors so as to entertain the congregation through the longueurs of the homily.

The church art even follows the Boholanos home, where it is displayed in smaller scale but no less ornate forms: the *urna*, *tabernaculo* or *bahay ng santo*, approximating the *retablo*; the *belen*, mimicking the church crèche; the household *santos*, especially the Sagrada Familia and its numerous individual manifestations in the Santo Niño, the Inmaculada Concepcion, the Mother of Perpetual Help.

In this section called "Sa Loob ng Tahanan" (In the Home), church art has become humanistic, as iconography becomes accessible objects presiding over home and family life.

SAN Vicente Ferrer of polychrome wood

Interesting interlude

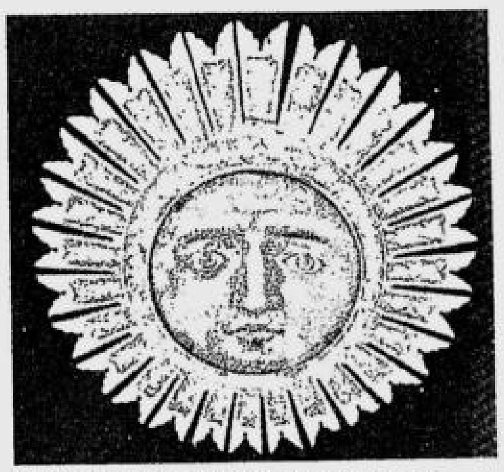
Classical lines, both Oriental and European, run through the furniture pieces in this section, from the chairs and tables to the commodes and china cabinets. Even then, the Boholanos, as most Filipinos do, couldn't help but embellish the surface of things.

An interesting interlude is "Mga Pag-aalsa" (Uprisings), which showcases Boholano art and culture during the Tamblot Uprising and the Dagohoy Revolt. The show's curator should be highly commended for not forgetting this important phase toward nationhood.

Here the pagan and the Christian meet, as manifested in the *urna* (the home altar, a private interior space with elaborate frame said to originate in an empty niche called *guwang* before which ancient believers danced) and the *anting-anting* (the amulets, rings, necklaces, bracelets, medallions, booklets, with symbols and prayers in corrupt Latin, worn by rebels for invincibility, later surrendered to church authorities).

The last section, "Mga Bagong Tagpo" (New Encounters), located upstairs on The Catwalk, displays Boholano art of the 20th century, representative pieces from Abueva, Cainglet, Teodorico Ramasola, Rosalio Ortiz, Hermogena Lungay. This is the synthesis of Boholano art and culture of the previous centuries, as well as a seeking of new forms and mediums, new arrangements, new audiences.

Its title and particularities notwithstanding, this exhibition is actually our story as a nation.


SUN-SHAPED **ornament with a face, of beaten metal and painted glass, probably for an icon of the Immaculate Conception**

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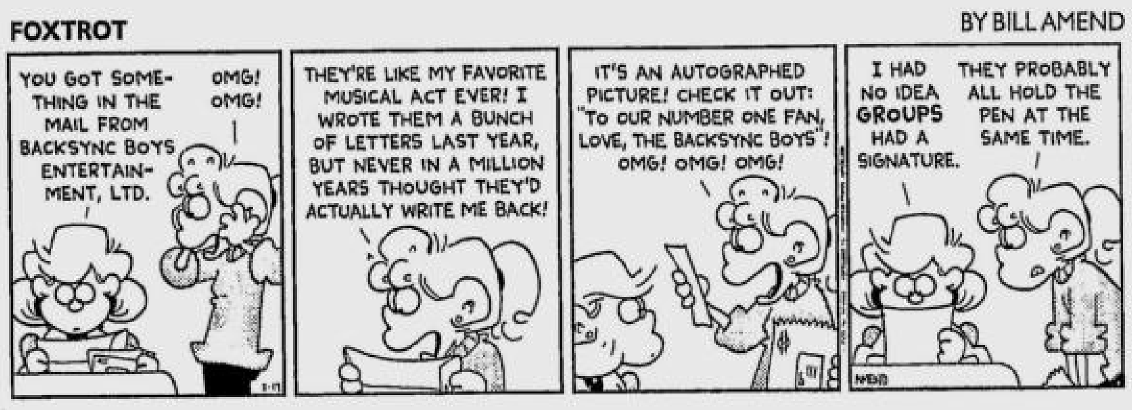
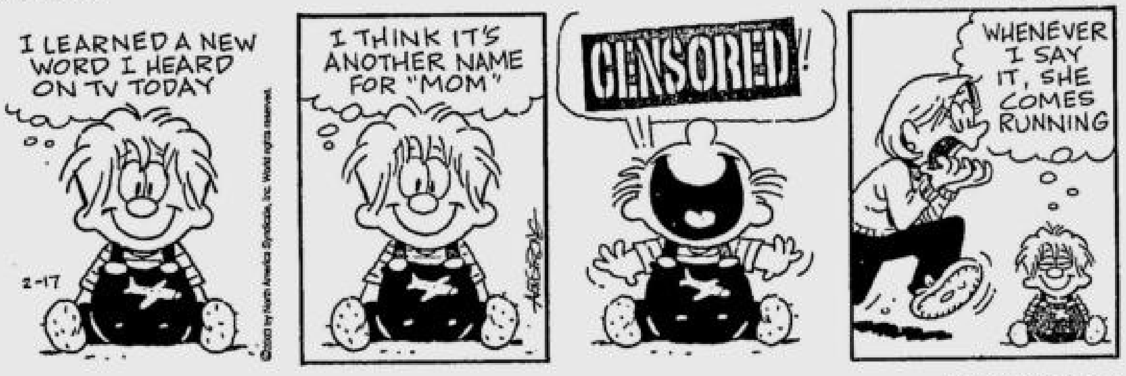
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


YOU GOT SOMETHING IN THE MAIL FROM BACKSYNC BOYS ENTERTAINMENT, LTD.
OMG! OMG!
THEY'RE LIKE MY FAVORITE MUSICAL ACT EVER! I WROTE THEM A BUNCH OF LETTERS LAST YEAR, BUT NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS THOUGHT THEY'D ACTUALLY WRITE ME BACK!
IT'S AN AUTOGRAPHED PICTURE! CHECK IT OUT: "TO OUR NUMBER ONE FAN, LOVE, THE BACKSYNC BOYS"! OMG! OMG! OMG!
I HAD NO IDEA GROUPS HAD A SIGNATURE.
THEY PROBABLY ALL HOLD THE PEN AT THE SAME TIME.

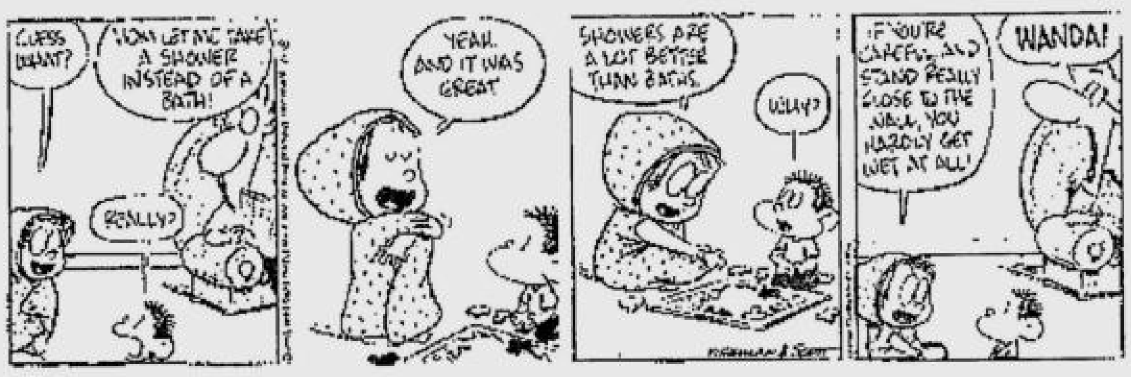
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I LEARNED A NEW WORD I HEARD ON TV TODAY
2-17
I THINK IT'S ANOTHER NAME FOR "MOM"
CENSORED!
WHENEVER I SAY IT, SHE COMES RUNNING

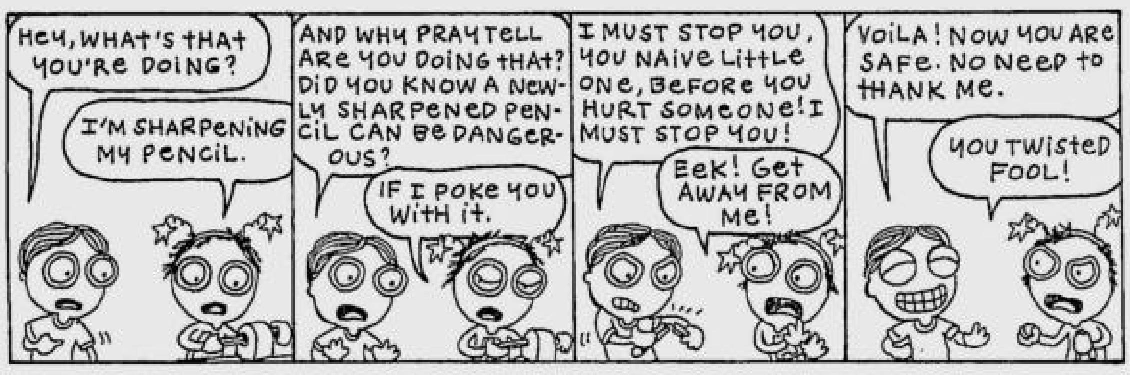
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


GUESS WHAT?
MOM LET ME TAKE A SHOWER INSTEAD OF A BATH!
REALLY?
YEAH. AND IT WAS GREAT
SHOWERS ARE A LOT BETTER THAN BATHS.
WHY?
IF YOU'RE CAREFUL AND STAND REALLY CLOSE TO THE WALL, YOU HARDLY GET WET AT ALL!
WANDA!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY, WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE DOING?
I'M SHARPENING MY PENCIL.
AND WHY PRAY TELL ARE YOU DOING THAT? DID YOU KNOW A NEWLY SHARPENED PENCIL CAN BE DANGEROUS?
IF I POKE YOU WITH IT.
I MUST STOP YOU, YOU NAIVE LITTLE ONE, BEFORE YOU HURT SOMEONE! I MUST STOP YOU!
EEK! GET AWAY FROM ME!
VOILA! NOW YOU ARE SAFE. NO NEED TO THANK ME.
YOU TWISTED FOOL!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY. You are a sensitive, philosophical individual. You also have a magnetic personality that draws people to you. You think big and act boldly. You do your homework before you make major decisions. In the year ahead, you have something important to learn. You will probably choose to give yourself more solitude.

Birthdate of: John Travolta, actor; Cybill Shepherd, actress; Yoko Ono, artist/singer/wife of John Lennon.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You will likely meet a real character today. On the other hand (the one wearing different rings), a familiar acquaintance might do something that absolutely shocks you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Surprise discussions with bosses, authority figures and even parents could catch you off-guard today. The net result is that you feel rebellious.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You love to learn anything original. This is an exciting day because you could be introduced to entirely new philosophies and systems of thought.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Stay on top of financial matters and everything having to do with insurance, taxes and debt. Possessions you share with another are subject to sudden loss or increase.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You will need extra patience dealing with others today, especially close friends and partners. They might be excited about something that you said. Be prepared to defend your position.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): This is not an easy day at work. Systems could break down. Electronics and computers are unreliable. Privately, you would rather be anywhere else.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Unexpected romance from surprising sources might spice up your day. You could suddenly develop a crush on the most unlikely individual. (There's no explanation for this.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be careful about electricity and fire at home today. Unexpected explosions and breakdowns are possible with appliances, equipment and even in the emotions of fellow family members. Have patience.

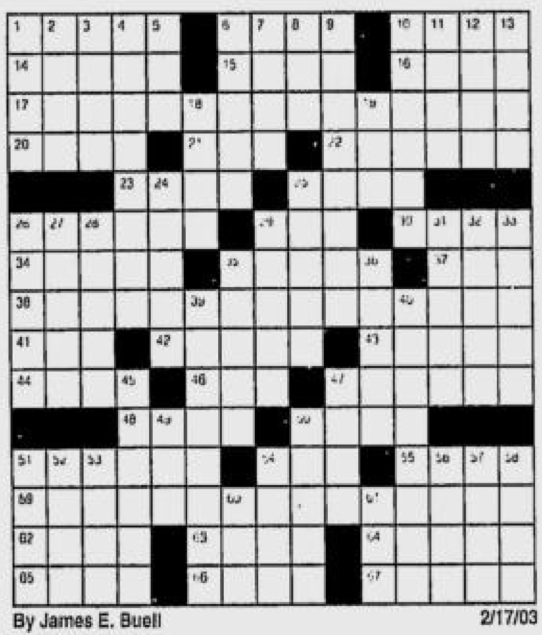
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You have a strong drive to break free from your usual daily routine of activity. You want something different, lively and exciting to occur. Whatever happens, expect surprises to crop up.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Do not be rash or impulsive about spending your money today. Similarly, act with restraint at work, because you just might blow your top.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel rebellious, energetic and unusually impulsive today. This could lead to disputes with others. What you are seeking is your own personal liberation.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might feel resentful toward government regulations that you feel restrict your freedom. But life is always a delicate balance between freedom and restriction so that there is order.

DAILY CROSSWORD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By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL
2/17/03

ACROSS
1 Big rigs
6 Cook
10 Left without words
14 Over 21
15 Word after town or dance
16 Culture medium
17 Vacillating Joel?
20 Individual
21 Commotion
22 Sea off Corfu
23 French cleric
25 Teensy tormentor
26 Break in the action
29 Gear tooth
30 Gabs
34 Cove
35 Crisp toast
37 "Runaway" singer Shannon
38 Old-fashioned Rich?
41 Fury
42 Works with a beam
43 Cager Shaq
44 Croat's neighbor
46 You bet!
47 Huggable
48 Guessed figs.
50 Put on a scale
51 Very drunk
54 Publicize
55 Horizontal barrier
59 Dexterous Travis?
62 To be in Tours
63 Stridex target
64 More aloof
65 "Doe, a __ ..."
66 Revolutionary time on earth?
67 Perplexed

DOWN
1 Old adages
2 Actress Falco
3 Comic Martin
4 Doomed
5 Hog home
6 Reprove mildly
7 Saintly glow
8 Cornering pipe
9 Passing quickly
10 Overly fastidious
11 Jamaican fruit
12 __ fide (in bad faith)
13 __ Mawr College
18 Collars
19 Long, fluffy scarf
24 Synthetic rubber
25 Olympic medals
26 Old-time music systems
27 Habituate
28 Wood for pilings
29 Relinquishes
31 Said further
32 Piano part
33 With guile
35 Erato and her sisters
36 In connection with
39 Routine
40 Perform with subtlety
45 Drinking spree
47 Dashing Grant
49 Wild blue yonder
50 Bill attachment
51 Molt
52 London gallery
53 Concerning
54 Actress Paquin
56 Black cuckoos
57 __ fixe (obsession)
58 Vega's constellation
60 Top card
61 Narrow inlet

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

P	U	S	H	K	I	N	■	M	A	H	O	U	T	S
I	N	T	E	N	S	E	■	A	L	B	A	N	I	A
E	A	R	N	E	S	T	■	T	O	O	R	D	E	R
T	B	O	N	E	■	■	M	I	T	■	■	U	S	A
A	L	K	A	L	I	Z	E	S	■	O	S	L	I	N
S	E	E	S	S	T	A	R	S	■	S	T	A	N	D
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F	I	B	■	■	A	T	E	■	■	R	E	P	R	O
I	N	U	T	I	L	E	■	F	R	E	S	H	E	N
S	T	R	I	D	E	S	■	O	U	T	T	A	K	E
H	O	G	N	O	S	E	■	P	E	S	E	T	A	S

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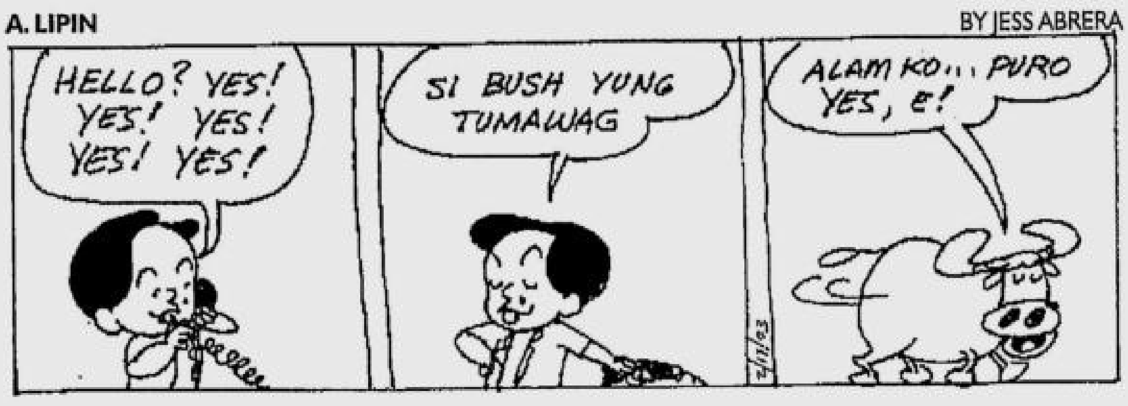
2/17/03

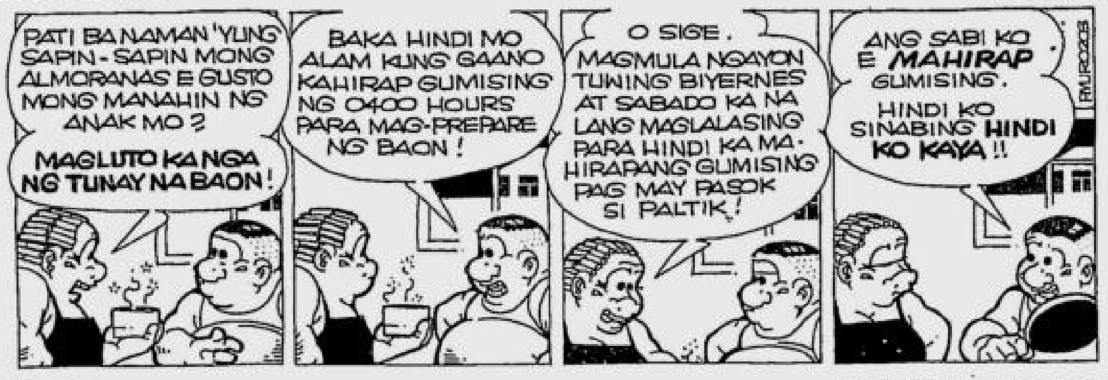
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HELLO? YES! YES! YES! YES! YES!
SI BUSH YUNG TUMAWAG
2/17/03
ALAM KO... PURO YES, E!

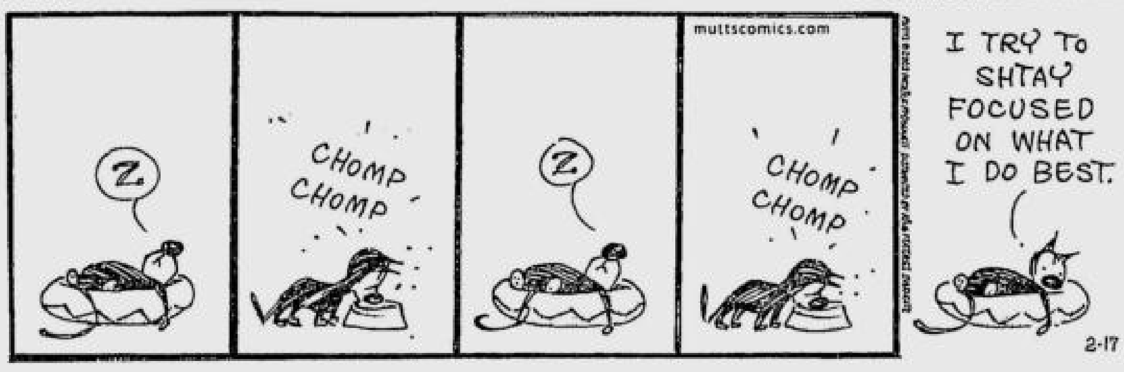
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PATI BA NAMAN 'YUNG SAPIN-SAPIN MONG ALMORANAS E GUSTO MONG MANAHIN NG ANAK MO?
MAGLUTO KA NGA NG TUNAY NA BAON!
BAKA HINDI MO ALAM KUNG GAANO KAHIRAP GUMISING NG 0400 HOURS PARA MAG-PREPARE NG BAON!
O SIGE. MAGMULA NGAYON TUWING BIYERNES AT SABADO KA NA LANG MAGLALASING PARA HINDI KA MAHIRAPANG GUMISING PAG MAY PASOK SI PALTIK!
ANG SABI KO E MAHIRAP GUMISING. HINDI KO SINABING HINDI KO KAYA!!

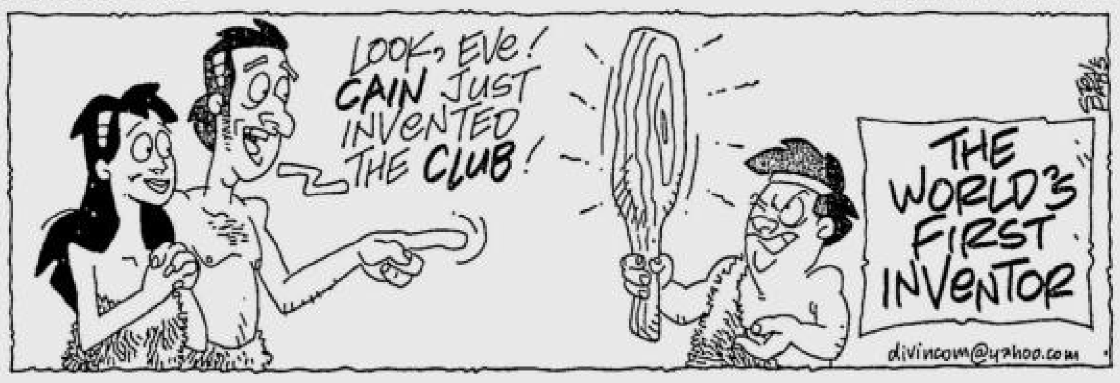
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Z
CHOMP CHOMP
Z
mutts comics.com
CHOMP CHOMP
I TRY TO SHTAY FOCUSED ON WHAT I DO BEST.
2-17

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


LOOK, EVE! CAIN JUST INVENTED THE CLUB!
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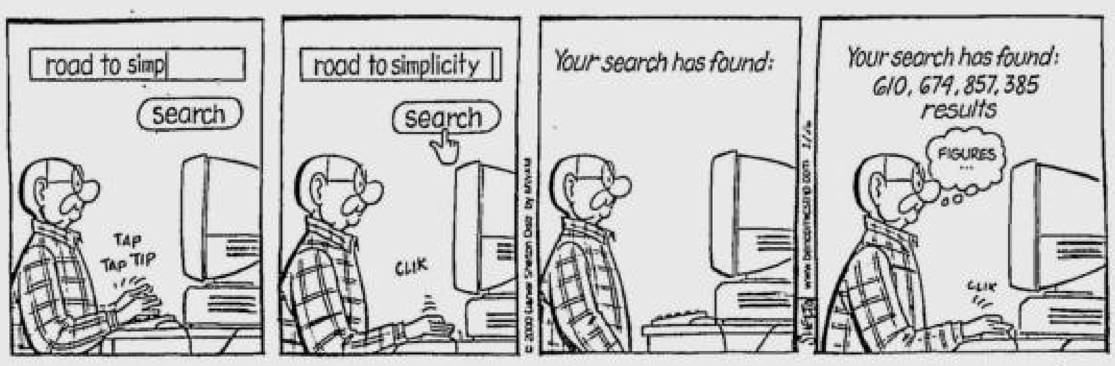
divincom@yahoo.com

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


road to simp
search
TAP TAP TIP
road to simplicity
search
CLIK
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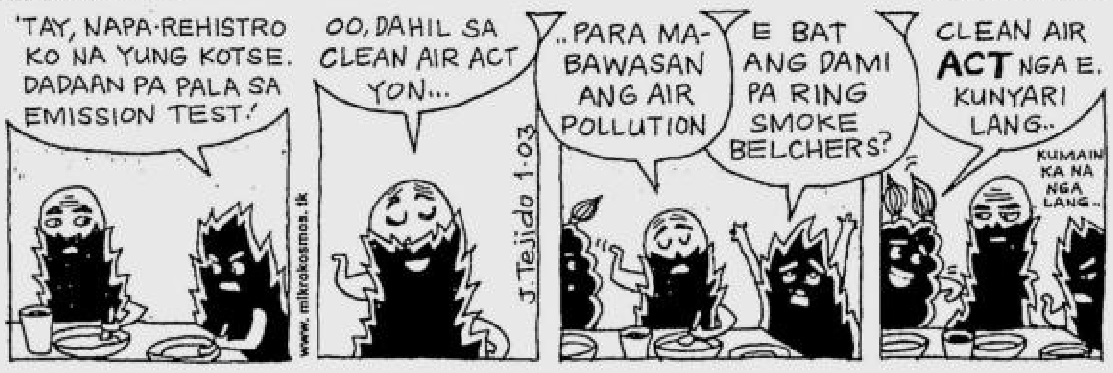
Your search has found: 610, 674, 857, 385 results
FIGURES ...
CLIK

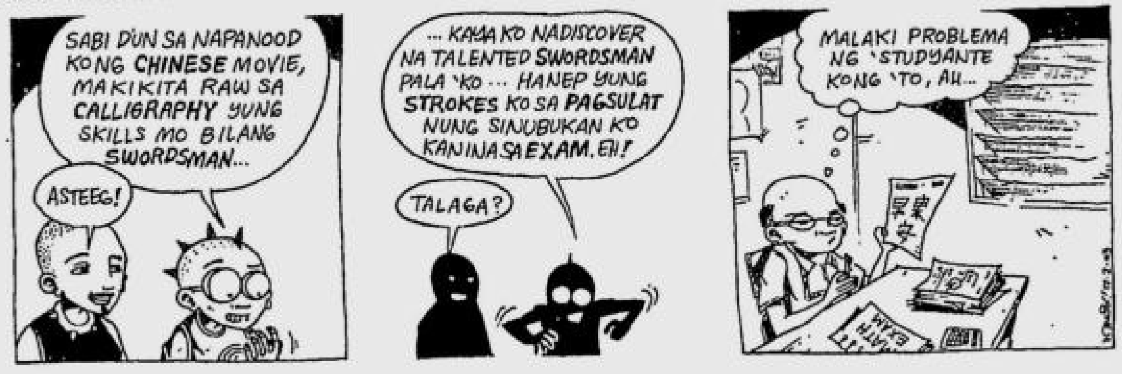
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


'TAY, NAPA-REHISTRO KO NA YUNG KOTSE. DADAAN PA PALA SA EMISSION TEST!
OO, DAHIL SA CLEAN AIR ACT YON...
www.mikrokosmos.tk
J. Tejido 1-03
..PARA MABAWASAN ANG AIR POLLUTION
E BAT ANG DAMI PA RING SMOKE BELCHERS?
CLEAN AIR ACT NGA E. KUNYARI LANG..
KUMAIN KA NA NGA LANG..

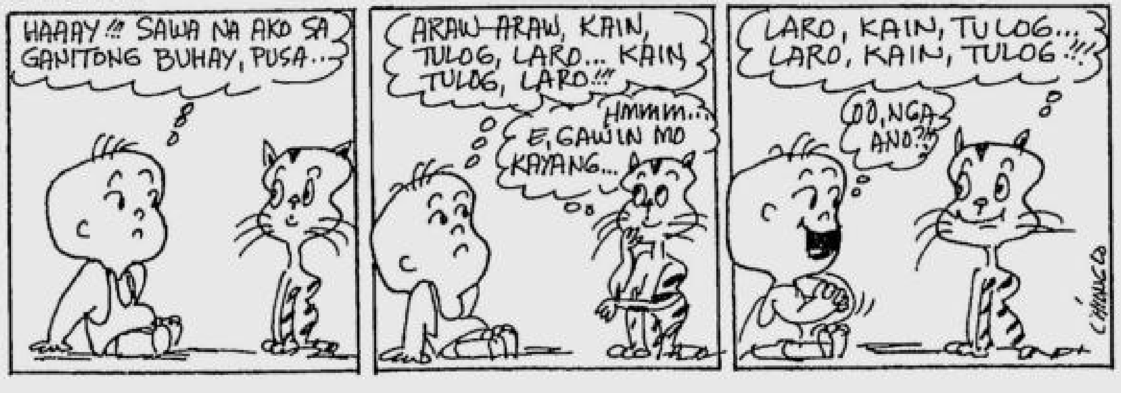
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SABI D'UN SA NAPANOOD KONG CHINESE MOVIE, MAKIKITA RAW SA CALLIGRAPHY YUNG SKILLS MO BILANG SWORDSMAN...
ASTEEG!
... KAYA KO NADISCOVER NA TALENTED SWORDSMAN PALA 'KO ... HANEP YUNG STROKES KO SA PAGSULAT NUNG SINUBUKAN KO KANINA SA EXAM. EH!
TALAGA?
MALAKI PROBLEMA NG 'STUDYANTE KONG 'TO, AH...

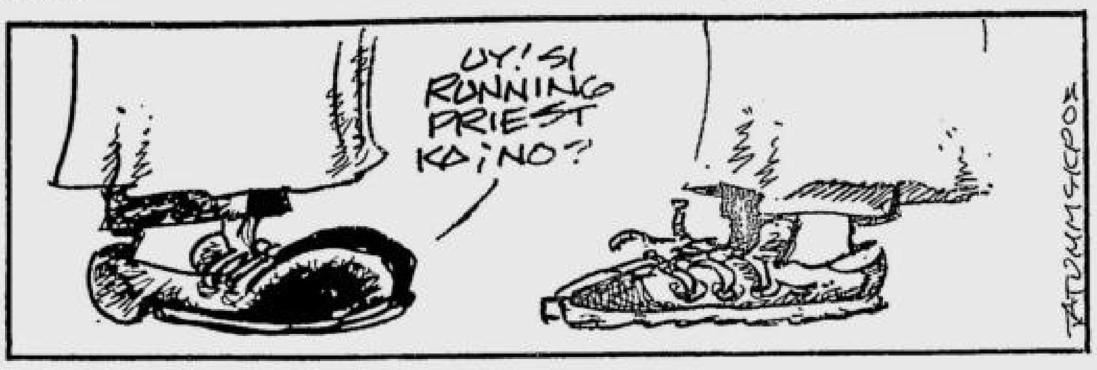
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

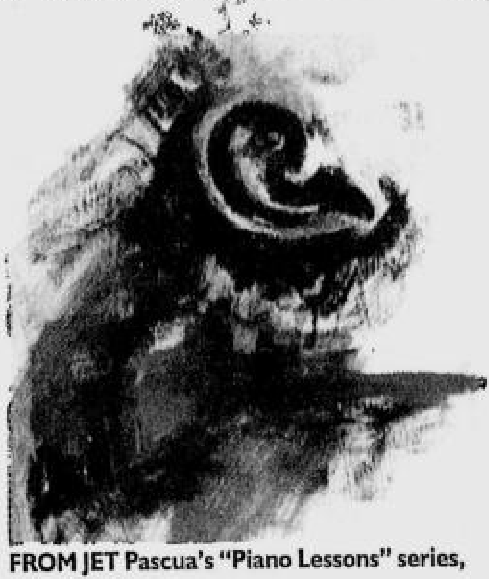

HAAAY!!! SAWA NA AKO SA GANITONG BUHAY, PUSA...
ARAW-ARAW, KAIN, TULOG, LARO... KAIN, TULOG, LARO!!!
HMMM... E, GAWIN MO KAYANG...
LARO, KAIN, TULOG... LARO, KAIN, TULOG!!!
OO, NGA. ANO?!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


UY! SI RUNNING PRIEST KA, NO?
TATUM MSICPOX

Pascua at West, JPalencia at Pineapple, 'Art for Zen' at Art Room


FROM JET Pascua's "Piano Lessons" series, mixed media

From page D2

and De la Salle University; Feb. 18—University of the Philippines and AMA University; Feb. 19—Far Eastern University and Mapua Institute of Technology; Feb. 20—University of Asia and the Pacific and University of Santo Tomas; Feb. 21—Miriam College. Call Florent Voiret of the French embassy at 810-1981.

REGGIE Yuson presents "Delineation," his latest show, at the West Gallery, Art Walk, 4/L SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, until Feb. 25. The exhibit features Yuson's latest graphite and charcoal line drawings. Call 634-1284.

"LIKHANG Sining," an on-the-spot painting competition at the Ayala Museum Galleries, will be held March 1. The competition is open to high-school students 12-18 years old. Entry forms are available at the Rotary Club offices or at the Ayala Museum, 3/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 813-4485, 753-3098, 840-1588 or 845-1655 (fax).

TWO exhibits featuring opposite genres are on view at Kulay Diwa Art Galleries. The works of Renato Barja, a student of the Philippine Women's University, will be on display at the Black Gallery. The exhibit is dubbed "Biyaheng Langit." At the Green Gallery are the enamel paintings of Don Barranco. The exhibits are on view until March 12. Call 826-0574.

Artist Bella holds arts and crafts workshop

INDUSTRIAL artist and painter Victor Bella is holding the workshop "Arts Inspiration Series For Gun, Gift-giving and Profit."

Group courses include artistic candle-making with decorative mold-making, decorative painting on glass metal and ceramics, flower scupture, figurine making, silicon rubber mold-making, decorative herbal and aroma theraphy soap with mold-making, and decorative transparent soap-making.

Painting tutorials are also offered.

Bella is a graduate of fine arts of the Maastricht Academy of Visual Arts in the Netherlands.

Those interested to see the work samples may visit www.geocities.com/victor_bella. For schedules of courses, visit www.geocities.com/victor_bella.html.

Call 834-7678.

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Alfiere presents guest Chef Giancarlo DiFrancesco from the award winning Prego Restaurant, twice voted Best Italian Restaurant and Silver Excellence awardee. Chef Giancarlo, shares his culinary expertise as Westin's specialist in Italian cuisine from a variety of successful stints at the celebrated Prego Restaurant. Savor the robust and satisfying flavors of Italy as he gives it a fresh, new twist and whips up a medley of gourmet specialties. Come and experience PREGO IN ALFIERE. Buon Apetito!

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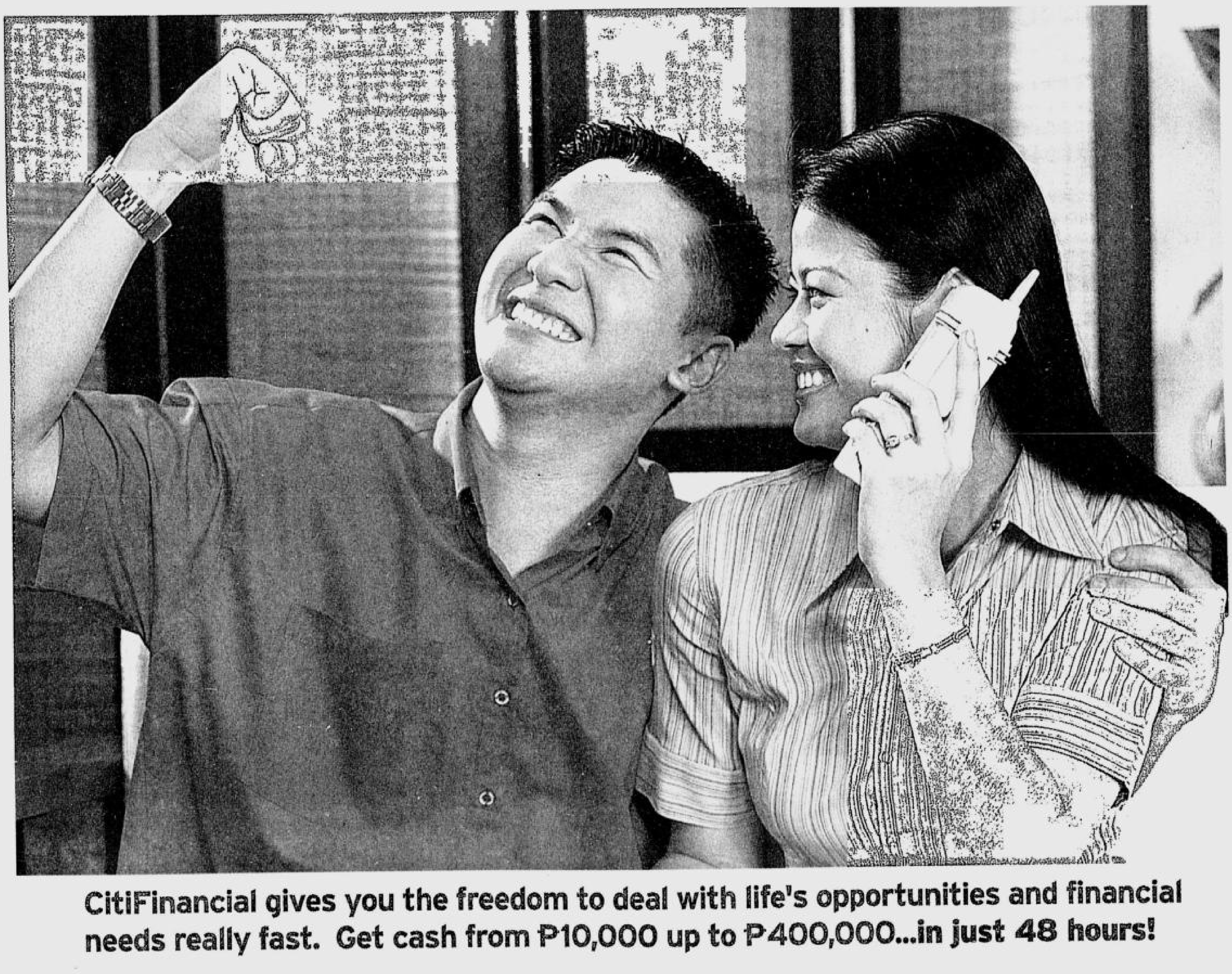

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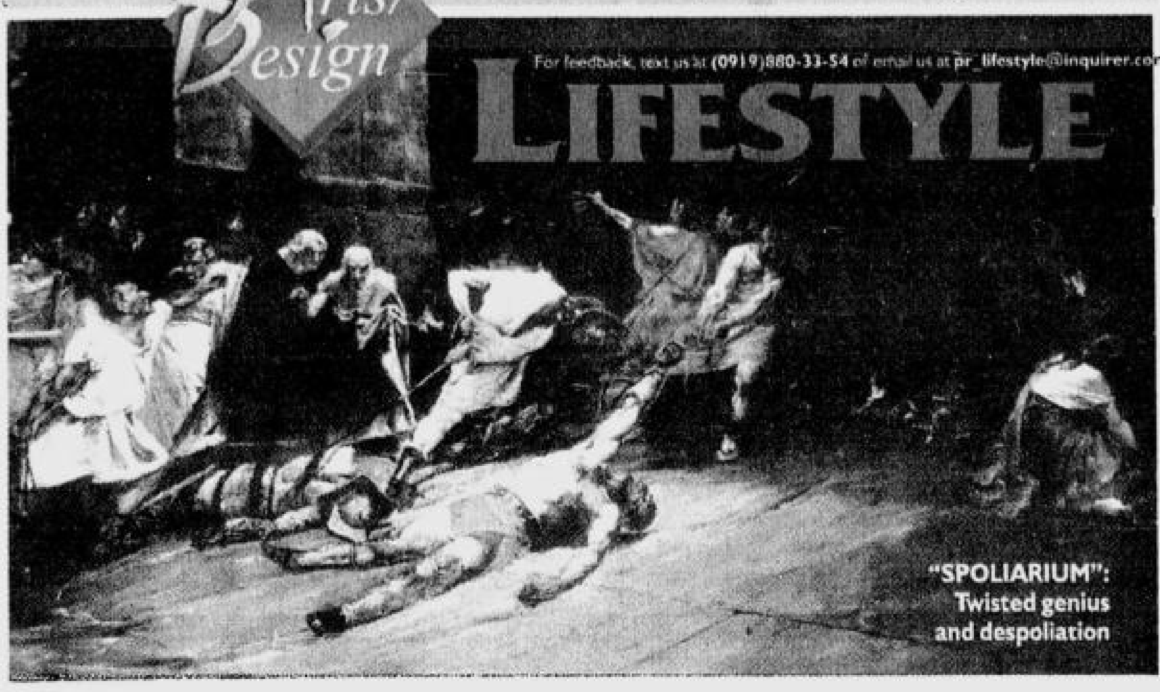
The dark side of genius

Was Luna's accidental shooting of his wife and mother-in-law actually premeditated? Was he after the Pardo de Tavera fortune?



"SPOLIARIUM": Twisted genius and despoliation

By Ambeth R. Ocampo

THIS weekend, a new opera by Ryan Cayabyab and Fides Cuyugan Asensio will make us rethink textbook history about Juan Luna and the mammoth prize-winning painting "Spoliarium" that now hangs in the National Museum. We all know Luna is one of the country's heroes, we know of his friendship with Jose Rizal and we know that he used his art to promote nationhood and Philippine independence from Spain.

THE DARK/ E2

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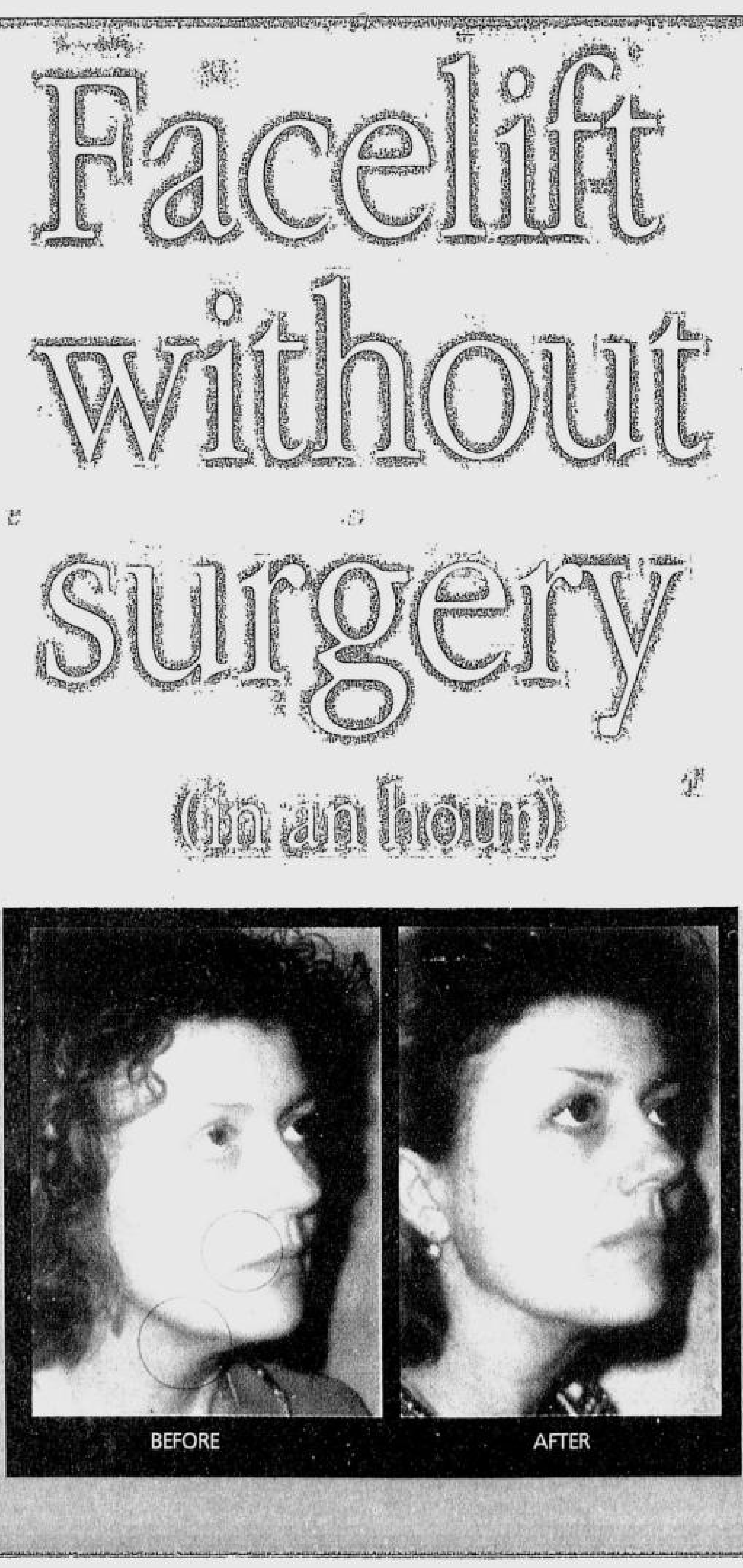

BEFORE AFTER

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And the results are amazing!
You can bring the clock back 5 to 15 years, depending on your anatomy and the skill and experience of the doctor.
The procedure takes less than an hour.
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And final results in less than four weeks.

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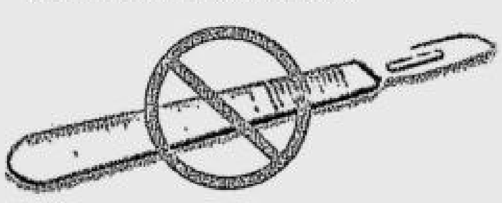
The basic idea is simple. A "feather weight" high resistance thread anchors itself to the facial tissue as the doctor lifts the sagging anatomical structures following the vectors (directions) appropriate to obtain the desired younger look.



No knives, no scars.

You'll enjoy looking at the mirror again.

The facial features will remain perfectly "anchored" in their new position for years to come.
The wonderful fact that the threads can be "touched up" in later years to maintain the natural and youthful appearance obtained makes this procedure invaluable.
Before Aptos Thread, the only resource available was the traditional facelift with all its risks, trauma, suffering, prolonged downtime and high cost.

Aptos Thread facelift: Belo's experts do it best.

Doctors at the Belo Medical Group were personally trained by Dr. Sulamanidze and they have already handled numerous Aptos procedures.
Aptos-threading looks like a very simple technique but as with any medical procedure, there's no substitute for experience in this particular method.
So, if you're wondering why some of your friends seem to look younger nowadays, they have probably visited Belo's recently. (But, we're not telling).

So, go look at the mirror. With your hands, lift up the portions of your face that Mother Nature can no longer handle. That'll give you an idea of how much younger you can look.
Then visit us.
With the Aptos thread we can help you defy gravity.
Without surgery.
Without pain.
And without the tight look of a facelift.
Promise.

AMAZING APTOS THREAD
By
Belo
BELO MEDICAL GROUP INC.

[illegible]

The dark side of genius

From page E1

What is, unfortunately, left out of textbook history, is the dark side of genius, that Luna killed his wife and mother-in-law in a celebrated crime of passion in Paris in 1892.

The story has been distorted over time because of the need to sanitize Luna's biography. Those who know the bare outline of the story believe that Luna discovered that his wife, Paz Pardo de Tavera, had an affair with a certain Mr. Dussaq. Luna steadily grew angry. One day the Lunas had a violent argument. Ms Luna and her mother Juliana Gorricho locked themselves inside a bathroom. Luna fired into the lock to open the door, hitting the women on the other side, killing them.

In 1997, I guided a group of interested Filipinos on a tour of Rizal's Paris. We visited the various hotels and apartments where the national hero stayed in the 19th century. We came across addresses associated with Luna. At one point in our pilgrimage, we decided to re-enact the events leading to Luna's murderous fit, causing pedestrians to stop and wonder what we were doing.

In our crude street-side reenactment of the killing in 1997, we realized that if Luna had tried to force the door open by firing into the lock, why were the two women, supposedly barring the door with their bodies, shot in the head?

Dr. Copernico Villaruel explained that maybe the women were peeping through the keyhole. But then their wounds, according to the police report, were behind the head.

Textbook history had to make the deaths of Paz Pardo de Tavera and Juliana Gorricho an accident rather than premeditated murder. It was also significant that all historical works on Luna mentioned that he was acquitted by a French court because what he did was a "crime of passion."

Not acquitted

Although most of the court records in the Paris legal archives were destroyed in a fire in 1977, the handwritten decision on the Luna case survives, and a careful reading of the decision shows that Luna was not acquitted, as popularly believed, but was actually condemned to pay Trinidad and Felix Pardo de Tavera the magnificent sum of one symbolic French franc because Luna caused them a loss for which reparation was due. One franc was interest on damages. The brothers Pardo de Tavera were condemned to pay court costs amounting to 1,651 FF and 83 centimes plus 25 francs for postage.

However, the delicious twist left out of all Luna biographies is that toward the end of the court decision, Luna was condemned to pay Trinidad and Felix the above costs plus interest, meaning Luna paid the 1,652FF and 83 centimes.

The question that should be asked then is: if Luna was acquitted, why did he pay court costs? Does this mean he was condemned but was merely let off lightly? So far the court decision awaits further comment and explanation from a lawyer competent in 19th-century French criminal law.

From various newspaper accounts—the Paris papers carried the Luna story for days—and the police report, we know that sometime around 10 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 22, 1892, Luna and his family were preparing to leave Paris for Vigo, Spain. To settle their domestic difficulties, Luna decided to settle in a place far from the meddling of his inlaws and far from the man Luna suspected of having an affair with his wife. It was a pleasant cloudy day of about 16 degrees, an agreeable day for a trip. That morning, the centennial of the French Republic was being celebrated in the Pantheon.

CAST OF "SPOLIARIUM": Allan Alojipan, Bonggoy Manahan, Robert Seña, Fides Asensio, Alex Cortez, Ana Feleo, Kitchie Molina and Andy Alvis ROGER CARPIO

First shot

According to the surviving court records as well as the police report, Luna first shot at his brother-in-law Felix, who was coming into the garden and moving toward the house. Felix was grazed above the right breast, the bullet entering above his right shoulder blade. Then the police report states that Luna:

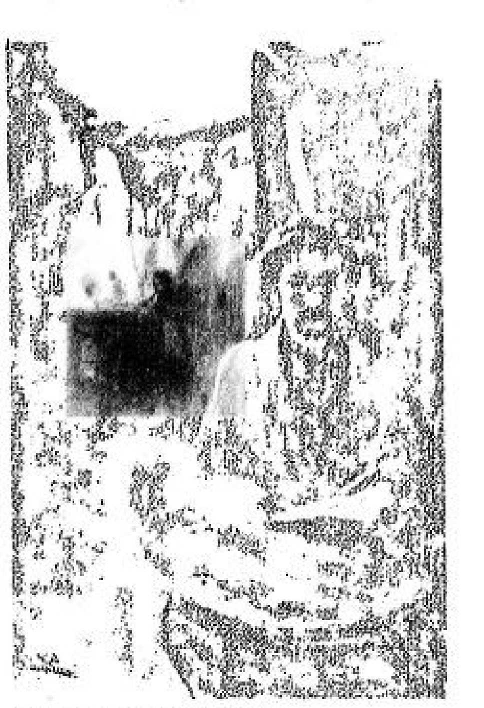
"(W)ent up to the second floor; the bathroom door, which is connected to his wife's bedroom, ceded to his blows. He entered, armed with his revolver, and found himself in the presence of a group near the window formed of the two women and the child, who got up from his bed out of fear and came to join them. [Juliana] detached herself from the group and crouched near a fake chimney by the bathtub. Luna fired on her, the bullet hit the left temple, crossed the brain and came out on the upper part of the skull, causing immediate death. Then he fired a third shot without result and a fourth bullet which broke and split the left parietal bone of his wife's head, and a part of it deeply penetrated the brain. Ms Luna died on October 4 [1892] without having regained consciousness."

JUAN Luna in Madrid

While the Cayabyab-Asensio opera will give us yet another version of the same story, embellished with music and drama, we must return to the historical sources—the court decision, the newspaper accounts of the murder—and research into the actual places where this bloody scene unfolded.

Unanswered questions

As a historian, all these materials leave me with more questions than answers. What, for example, made Luna snap? Was his mother-in-law's attitude toward him negative? Did she meddle in their affairs? What was the relationship between Luna and his brother-in-law Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera? One newspaper report quoted Luna as having expressed remorse over killing his wife and mother-in-law because he wanted to kill someone else. Luna is quoted as having said, "I wanted to kill Trinidad for he brought misfortune on this house." Yet it was Trinidad who tried to save the marriage—at least from the beginning, before Luna started beating his wife. It was Trinidad who talked the family out of their initial disapproval of Luna that paved the way for their marriage. It was Trinidad who supported Luna's son Andres through school.



SELF-PORTRAIT (1885)

To complicate matters further, Paz was not in control of her share of the Pardo de Tavera fortune. When Juliana Gorricho died on the spot, part of her estate was automatically transferred to the comatose Paz, who died two weeks later. Upon her death, Paz's estate transferred to her son Andres, a minor; thus the administrator of the estate was Juan Luna. Could this explain—aside from deep personal loss—the lawsuit of Trinidad and Felix Pardo de Tavera against Luna? Was the case, aside from murder, a case that determined control of Andres Luna de San Pedro's inheritance?

History remains open and engaging because each new discovery leads to different angles, to different versions of a story we think we know only too well. All these make us rethink the way in which Luna has been presented by historians. More important, they make us reflect on the way we remember heroes. Maybe we should look back on our tendency to make heroes in our image and likeness. Does Luna's murderous fit make him any less a patriot or an artist? Does his genius exempt him from justice?

The homicide in Paris in 1892 not only stresses the dark side of genius but makes Luna, who has been fossilized by textbooks, human again.

Ryan Cayabyab is unfettered by labels

By Cora Llamas
Contributor

"I'VE been tagged as too pop for classical music, and too classical for pop music," says multiawarded Ryan Cayabyab as he brushes aside innuendos casually. He doesn't sound too bothered by whatever labels they give him.

Nor, as he offhandedly reveals, by his being second choice for some famous Pinoy musicals.

To the man who's made a name for interplaying classical, Broadway, modern, and even jazz music, what ultimately matters is that he got to do the piece, period. The winner of various prestigious musical competitions in Asia and the West, including second place at the recent 2001 Laureate Award of the Alexander Onassis Public Benefit Cultural Prize, may just have found himself on kindred artistic soil this time around.

His latest production, "Spoliarium," on the life of controversial master painter Juan Luna, is a blend of opera and musical theater. Supporting him is the 60-strong "all acoustics, no electronics" San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra.

More challenging

"Musical theater is bigger and you have to write in terms of a story," he says of the art form. "In concert, you may have a theme but you don't have a story and the songs are not related. *Mas* challenging [*ang* theater] in the sense *na ang lawak noong iniisip mo*—how to string all [those scenes] from beginning to the end. It's also hard. The amount of time [involved in] doing a two-hour piece is definitely more than when you do a 30-second jingle or one song.

"You deliver the story fast. *Kung hindi makukuwento ang* story sa lyrics, *madadala ng* music *ang* emotions, pushing it faster or slowing it down, or creating a larger [emotional sweep].

"I also like doing [musical theater] because it is part of a larger work, and not just in terms of scale."

Fulfilling

A large part of the fulfillment comes from working with other artists who help make the storyline come to life. In "Spoliarium's" case, romance, murder and tragedy contend with the sparks of genius in a broad cultural canvas consisting of the Philippines, Spain and the rest of Europe. Following a tradition he started with Rolando Tinio's "Larawan," Cayabyab asked the ensemble to read Fides Cuyugan-Asensio's libretto in front of him.

"I'm there watching, the natural feel of the drama unfolding. I get the feel of the language and listen to it. It's so much easier to put into music."

Later, during rehearsals, he'd collaborate closely with the cast as they flesh out the characters and breathe in his music.

Cayabyab has high praises for lead actor Robert Seña who plays the driven, peerless, if fatally flawed Luna. "I dare say that I cannot see anyone [having] the same kind of voice or passion that he puts into the role." In one case, "*kinanta niya iyong note na akala kong mataas na. Nakita ko, puwede ko pa siyang i-*push. The next day *tinaasan ko na!* That's the joy. You have an instrument who's willing to push it to the limit."

Stomped

Describing himself as a fast composer who can craft a major theatrical piece in two straight weeks, Cayabyab occasionally consults with Asensio or director Alex Cortez when the emotional levels of certain scenes are not clear. The trial court scene in France, with its monotone documentary lyrics ("The Assisi court tried Luna on this day, etc., etc.") stumped him for more than a week. Once Cortez described this climactic scene as akin to a military court with a theatrical flourish, it's as if the proverbial light-bulb snapped open in Cayabyab's creative processes.

"When he said, 'military,' I went 'Poom!' *Alam ko na ang gagawin ko.*" For the next 30 seconds, Cayabyab hums and sings with gusto the notes of what sounds like a martial parade, but this time with all the guns going off to the accompaniment of drum beats.

On first reading of the script, Cayabyab was "struck by the drama of the violence, that was what got me." Yet he regards Luna, who killed his wife Paz in a fit of enraged jealousy, as a very passionate, but certainly not an insane, man.

"In a fit of anger, you forget so many things. Look at what people do in traffic or while *nag-uunahan sa* parking area. [Anger] is as regular as everyday headlines. But Luna is a romantic figure, and [part of the romance] is stretching it into larger proportions, bordering on the edge of kookiness or craziness. In the libretto, you can see how Luna becomes—and I quote—'deranged' at the end. With Robert's acting, *makikita mo iyong* degeneration or progression into madness."

Defining music

Beyond advancing the storyline, music goes a long way in building up the emotional context of a theatrical production. It defines and colors the characters struggling in the drama, exposing hidden layers and motivations that even the written word can't articulate. "That's what music does. *Nararamdaman mo na hindi mo nakikita, dumederesto siya sa pakiramdam, nanunuot siya sa iyong loob* without the words.

"Sometimes, music goes over the words [and] that's when I get excited. I want to put in some subtext, nuances *na mararamdaman mo na wala roon sa* word."

Yet, paradoxically, as a musical theater composer, the script itself—the word—serves as his ultimate inspiration. "People have always asked me what inspires me. I'm compelled by the script. If the script is compelling, I can see [the scenes and the flow] moving."

"Spoliarium" is Cayabyab's first English-language musical theater piece. His previous works—"Alikabok," "Noli Me Tangere," "El Filibusterismo," "Larawan"—were all written in Filipino.

"I realized how much different the writing is when you have a different language," he says of the experience. "It shows in my Filipino musicals—the language is long-winded, the melody lines are also long. Since the accents are different, *iba ang bagsakan ng* syllables at consonants."

It would have been easier had the Pinoy librettos he'd done were metered (exceptions include works by Joey Reyes and Bienvenido Lumbera). "Super-*dali kung may meter; kasi mayroon kang* pattern, *mapaplano mo kung saan iyong mga verses, ang dali gumawa ng* music. [Without the meter] *mahirap kasi ako ang mag-aayos ng* meter *noon. Iyong mga* pauses, they have to be done correctly. *Kung may isang buong* sentence, *hindi mo siya mababali* just by halving it."

The English-language "Spoliarium" "should have been difficult, but I have no idea why it's easier. *Mas madali ko siya maposisyon.* It's the way it was written. It's prose, [not] poetic."

Cayabyab pauses to ruminate, "I really don't know why. I think it's in the reading. *Kapag nagbabasa ka ng libro sa Ingles o Tagalog, di ba, ano ang mas mabilis?*"

Original concept

The production overhauled the ending right before the Christmas break of rehearsals. The original concept didn't end with the people applauding the acquitted artist.

The jubilation eventually whispers to tragic images of the artist, now an old man, fading into oblivion, consigned to the hell of painting landscapes.

CAYABYAB

'Spoliarium' is a blend of opera and musical theater

Cayabyab had musically envisioned a bleak, depressing descent into silence, shocking the audience to contemplate Luna's monumental decline.

"*Walang pakiramdam. Malungkot.*" But it might have proven anti-climactic to an audience used to hearing the last powerful moving note sung to its highest peak, in defiance or celebration. Anything but this despondent nothing.

Cayabyab guffaws at the memory and the intention now.

"[Cortez, Asensio and I] were caught up in the ending of Tchaikovsky's 6th symphony. After all that passionate music in the first, second, third, movements, the fourth becomes... *kawawa naman ang buhay ko. Namatay, namatay, hanggang nawala iyong* sound. We had just seen the performance of the Russian conductor Dmitri Liss in Manila. [After the last movement] he was still for a long time and we were so caught up in the drama."

The cheery sound of the holidays must have jogged the cobwebs from the creative team's mind.

"*Nag-iba na.* We thought, '*Baka walang mag-*applaud!'" Cayabyab admits candidly, grinning.

The new ending has a chorus singing of the mysteries and lamentations of why transcendent genius has no country, right during the hero's acquittal. "You hear all these shouts of people acclaiming, 'Viva! Viva! Luna!' Then there's this punctuation mark of a high note being sung. People will applaud."

Perhaps even overcoming the implications of the murder and the foreshadowing of the tragedy? Cayabyab doesn't miss a beat. "The music will raise them there!"

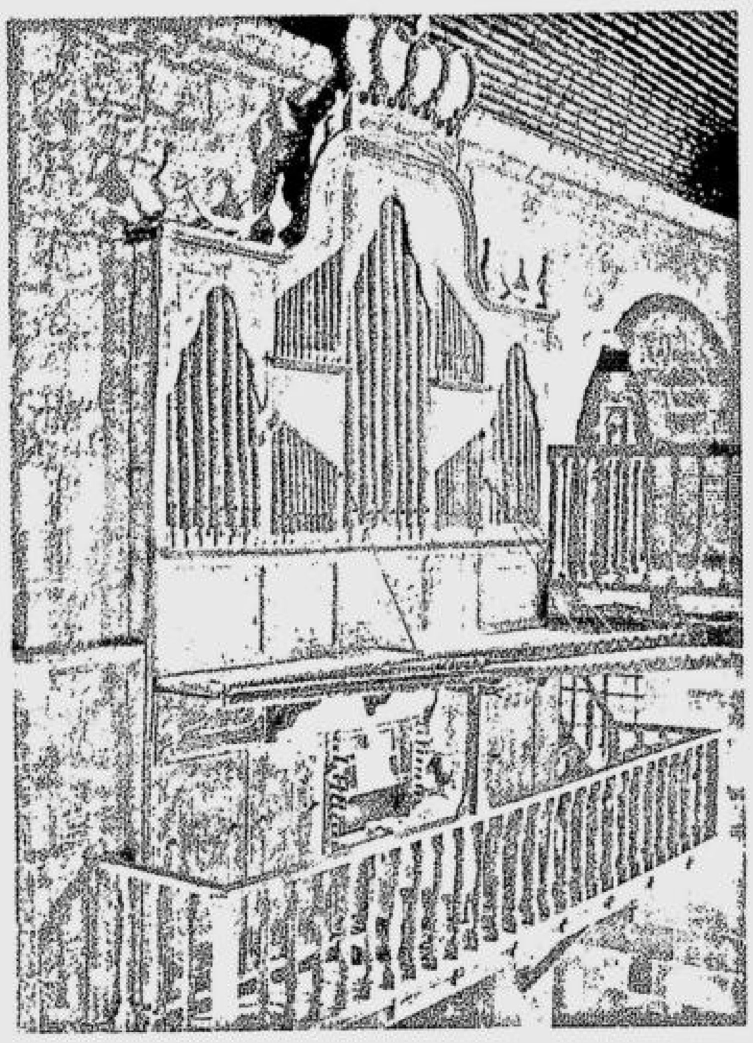
"Spoliarium" opens this Friday at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, with repeat performances at the St. Scholastica's College. Call 421-1898 and 439-5297.

A SCENE from the musical with actual mural in background ROGER CARPIO

OPERA GUILD. (seated, from left) John Mulhall, Margarita Yulo Gomez, Imelda Cojuangco, Fides Asensio and Robert Seña; (standing, from left) Dr. Jaime Laya, Alexander Cortez, Benjie Yap, Tita Turralba, Marietta Santos, Ryan Cayabyab, Ron Cornejo, Bonggoy Manahan, Claus Freund, Della Besa, Francis Ablan and Pitoy Moreno

The sound of bamboo music

The 28th Bamboo Organ Festival gives tribute to Richard Rogers



By Allan Pastrana
Contributor

THE WEEK-LONG celebration of this year's International Bamboo Organ Festival will once again regale an array of audiences at the Las Piñas Church on Feb. 21-28.

An impressive batch of local and foreign artists is set to take center stage throughout the duration of the festival. Now on its 28th year, it has been faithfully promoting a sense of community and culture through music.

As the Roman Catholic Church was one of the "twin engines of Spanish colonial expansionism" (the words of Dr. William Summers, coordinator of the International Hispanic Music Study Group), the Recollects took the town of Las Piñas under its auspices. In this locale, Fray Diego Cera established an organ-building workshop, and worked in 1816-1824 on his most enduring creation, the Bamboo Organ.

The instrument underwent a considerable number of repairs, until it was taken to Germany in 1973 for its final restoration and eventual reinstallation in Las Piñas in 1975. Ever since, it has been the focus of an annual festival of international repute, which reflects the undying commitment of its organizers to the arts.

Msgr. Allen Aganon (president, Bamboo Organ Foundation Inc.) and Della Gamboa Besa (artistic director) will lead this year's festivities with a couple of new treats for its patrons.

The set of performers (either based here or abroad) is predominantly Filipino. Two Belgian artists will grace one evening to perform as a duo.

Another aspect of the festival worth noting is its exploration of new musical textures provided by the instrumentation of the pieces to be performed.

Besa said they chose compositions accompanied by small ensembles because the cost of an orchestra was beyond their means. She made it clear though, that even if they were going to economize, they would not compromise on the quality of the program.

Rightful place

To the delight of the true aficionados, this is also the year when the organ regains its rightful place in the repertoire. In all concerts, no matter what is featured, the organ unfailingly soars with its charming and unique timbre. Enthusiasts will find great pleasure in the chamber ensemble numbers for two organs; organ and trumpet; harpsichord and cello; and chorus, four soloists, two pianos and organ.

The annual "Concert under the Trees" will be a fitting tribute to the American composer Richard Rodgers as the world celebrated his 100th birthday last year. It will include a good number of representative songs from his collaboration with Oscar Hammerstein and Lorenz Hart.

On Feb. 21, the festival opens with a concert, "Lauda." J.S. Bach's cantata, "Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste allerbeste Zeit" (subtitled "Actus Tragicus") and Ottori-

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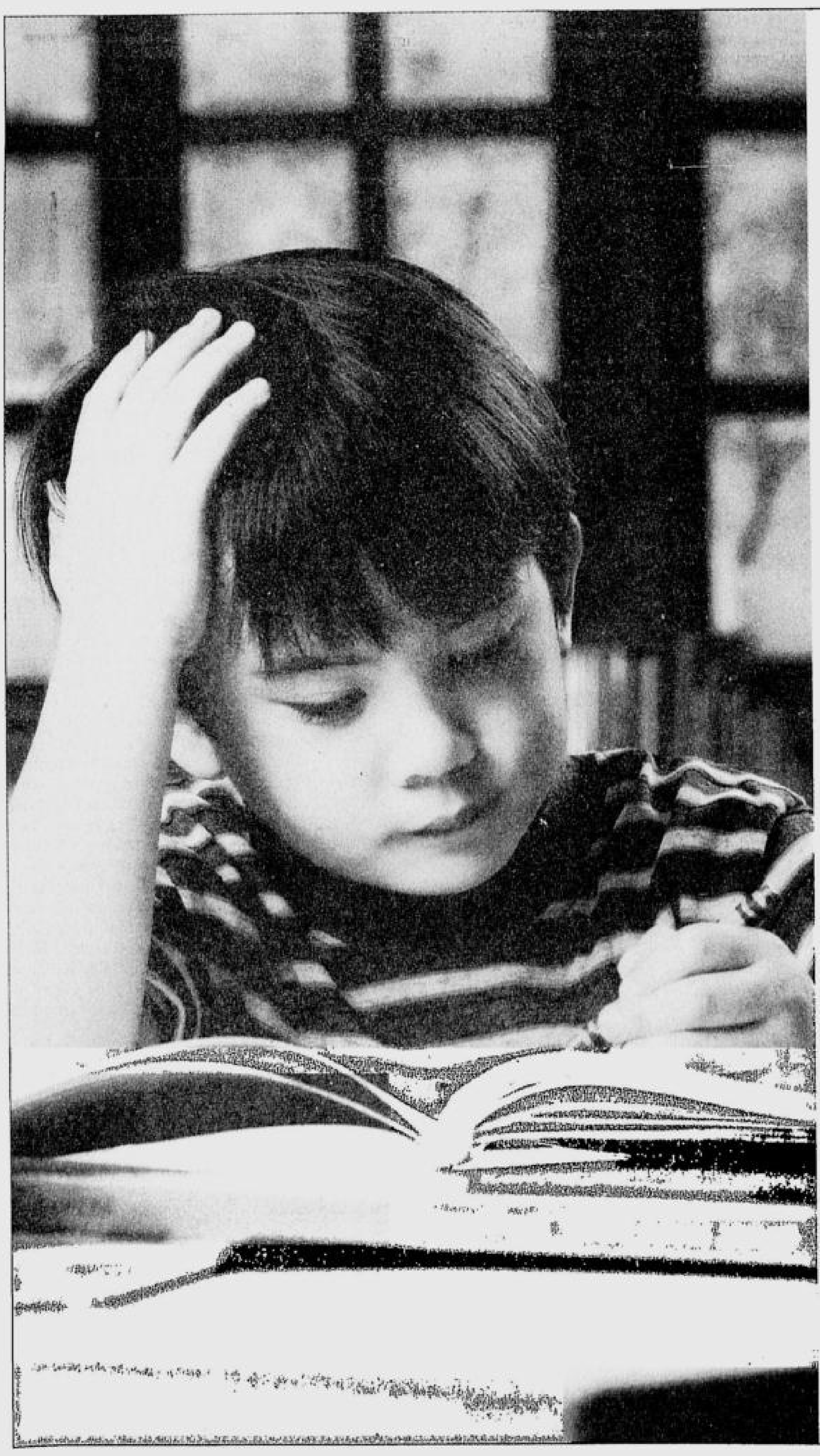

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'Friends' sing for Lady of Matinloc

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

SINCE the Immaculate Heart of Mary Prayer Center was built in 1997, it has become a favorite pilgrimage destination of Marian devotees from all over the archipelago, who want to pay homage to the Blessed Lady of Matinloc.

OUR Lady of Matinloc

The center is named after the Immaculate Heart of Mary who stands before the Cross, symbol of her son Jesus Christ. Mary, with her Immaculate Heart, is depicted stepping on a serpent, a symbol of the triumph over evil as written in the Scripture: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; she will crush your head as you strike her heel (Gen 3:15)." The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the banner of the Divine Plan for the ultimate triumph of God over Satan.

The prayer center, hailed as the New Jerusalem, is said to be the result of a divine revelation conveyed through a nurse. She reportedly became ill when she initially ignored her vision.

The image of the Blessed Virgin enshrined in the prayer center would later bear the name of the place: Our Lady of Matinloc. "Matinloc" is "beautiful" in Cuyonin and "clean" in Visayan.

When the Movement of Mary (MOM) searched for the site in 1984, they had no idea that the island, Matinloc, in El Nido, Palawan, was heart shaped, until an aerial survey was done.

One photograph taken revealed the image of the crucified Christ on the left and the Blessed Mother holding the Child Jesus. The message was interpreted thus: "Look for the heart of my son, it is in Matinloc, Palawan."

Vision of the shrine

And in 1985, after completing the first major pilgrimage in the shrine, a male devotee was reported to also have a vision. He saw a hole in the heavens encircled by a bright rainbow and from where a dome-shaped structure descended. It had 12 columns and a circular altar with the Immaculate Heart of Mary standing in the middle before a wooden cross.

The visionary immediately sketched what he saw and marked the place where the structure descended. When the construction began, it followed closely his vision. The columns represented the 12 tribes of Israel; the rainbow, the sign of the covenant; the dome, the heavenly mantle; and the circular structure, God, the Alpha and Omega.

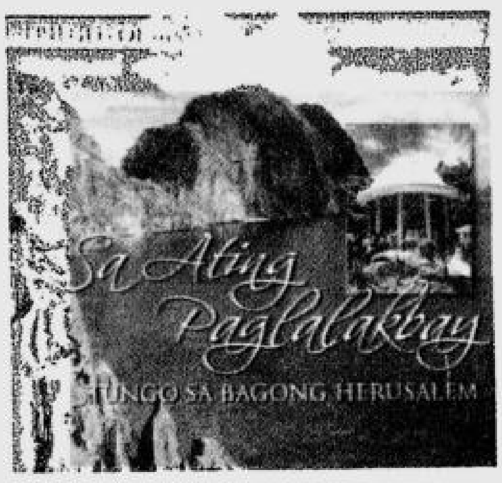
The dome features a stained glass depicting the Good Shepherd, the symbol of salvation. Christ is the Lamb, the Divine Sacrifice for the redemption of humankind. The altar rotates to symbolize the Blessed Mother's global mission as Co-Redemptri, Mediatrix and Advocate.

The center is designed to be the pilgrimage venue for all Marian movements in the country working for the salvation of humankind.

Recently the Friends of Matinloc, which spearheaded the project to build the shrine, cut its second CD of devotional songs for the Virgin and other spiritual songs. "Sa Aking Paglalakbay, Tungo sa Bagong Herusalem," like the first CD, is a tribute to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, on the 25th year of his Pontificate.

An invitation

A highlight of the CD is the song "Come to the Distant Shores," an invitation to the Pope to visit. It was inspired by His Holiness' poem, "Song of the Hidden God."



Teresita Fernandez-Laumond, a Marian devotee and organizer of the "Friends," wrote the lyrics. Although non-Catholic, Grace F. Quioyo has composed most of the music in the album. "This only means that ecumenism is alive and kicking," she said. Jonicis S. Bulalacao scored the music for Psalm 118.

The songs unfold like a prayer, easy to follow, catchy and meditative. Singers include tenor Eugene de los Santos, chair of the "Friends;" sopranos Elisanta G. Cortes and Maria Hasmen Aliw-iw R. Pioquinto; and the Sto. Domingo Male Chorale, under Nicanor C. Infante.

"We envision the CD to touch directly the listeners, who hopefully would welcome God into their hearts, through the intercession of the Lady of Matinloc," Laumond said.

Proceeds from CD sale will benefit the Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay and Puerto Princesa in Palawan, and the mission of the Friends of Matinloc. Laumond can be reached at tel. 817-7506 to 08.

A new CD of devotional songs for Mama Mary is a tribute to Pope John Paul II on the 25th year of his Pontificate

The sound of bamboo music

From page E3

JOSIE Roces Chavez PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

no Respighi's "Lauda per la Nativita del Signore" will be performed.

The first one, according to Spitta, contains the "contrast between the spirit of the Old and New Testaments, between the wrath of an avenging God and the atoning love of Christ." The latter is a good example of Respighi's "archaizing principles," a large Christmas carol "pervaded throughout by suggestions of 16th-century madrigals, Montiverdian and other pre-Classical music."

Jonathan Velasco conducts the Philippine Hamper Choir and the Ateneo Chamber Singers with soloists Armela Fortuna Widmer, Grace Chan, Randy Gilongo and Noel Azcona. Other featured artists are Jan Van Mol, organ; Cristel de Meulder, soprano; Rommel Reyes, trumpet; and resident organist Armando Salarza.

Under the trees

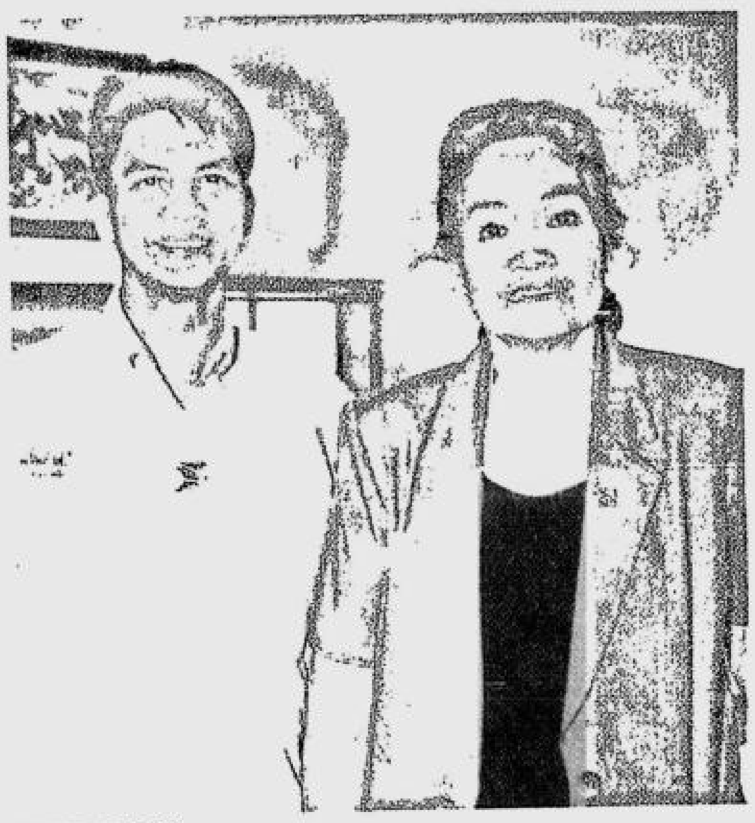
"Concert under the Trees" on Feb. 22 is an outdoor performance that will feature Josie Roces Chavez, Eugene Villaluz, Armela Fortuna Widmer and Randy Gilongo sing Broadway hits, accompanied by instrumentalists Johnny Torres, Butch Roxas and Ruben Reyes. Also featured is The Company.

Belgian organist Jan Van Mol and soprano Cristel de Meulder return on Feb. 23 in "An Evening of Organ and Vocal Music" featuring the works of Mozart and the Italian opera composer Gian Francesco de Majo, whose music was described by Mozart himself as "bellissima" when he heard it in a church in Naples.

A special event titled "Mozart et al." will feature chamber works by Mozart, Beethoven, Bach and Rachmaninoff on Feb. 24. Performers include Nena del Rosario Villanueva, Oscar Yatco, Dino Decena, Geronimo Velasco and Fr. Manuel Maramba, OSB.

On Feb. 25, the organ, harpsichord and piano will be the featured instruments in an event of chamber music, to be played by Raul Sunico, Najib Ismail, Della Besa, Armando Salarza and Gerardo Fajardo. Highlight of the event is Brahms Neue Liebeslieder, op. 65, with singers Armela Fortuna Widmer, Grace Chan, Randy Gilongo and Noel Azcona.

Brahms composed it to honor his chosen homeland, the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the Danube. In these waltzes, which is "full of Magyar passion and bitterness," he revived the old dance-song in a new idiom. Also featured are Rommel Reyes and Wilfredo Pasamba.


MSGR. ALLEN Aganon and Della Gamboa Besa

An informal evening gathers festival artists together with Salarza, Rea Lodronio, the Las Piñas Boys Choir, and the Festival Choir as they perform varied Filipino and European compositions in "Festival Glimpse" on Feb. 26.

Rossini's last major work, "Petite Messe Solenelle" closes the festival. The composer's predilection for Bach's music is evident in this work. It is no mere imitation but rather an attempt to uphold historical traditions while resorting to a modern musical vocabulary. Many people believe this particular masterpiece is the "deep revelation of a man whose outward character often seemed a mere witticism."

Velasco will again conduct, with pianists Sunico and Ismail and resident organist Salarza, on Feb. 27-28.

The festival is organized by the Bamboo Organ Foundation Inc., in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Department of Tourism, Sen. Manuel B. Villar Jr., Rep. Cynthia Villar, Mayor Vergel Aguilar and the City Government of Las Piñas, International Exchange Bank, Casimiro Development Corporation, Eternity Memorial Park, Manila Times Publishing Corporation, Menzi Trust Fund, Equitable-PCI Bank, OOCL Philippines, Marilag Corporation, Diego Cera Organbuiders Inc. and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation.

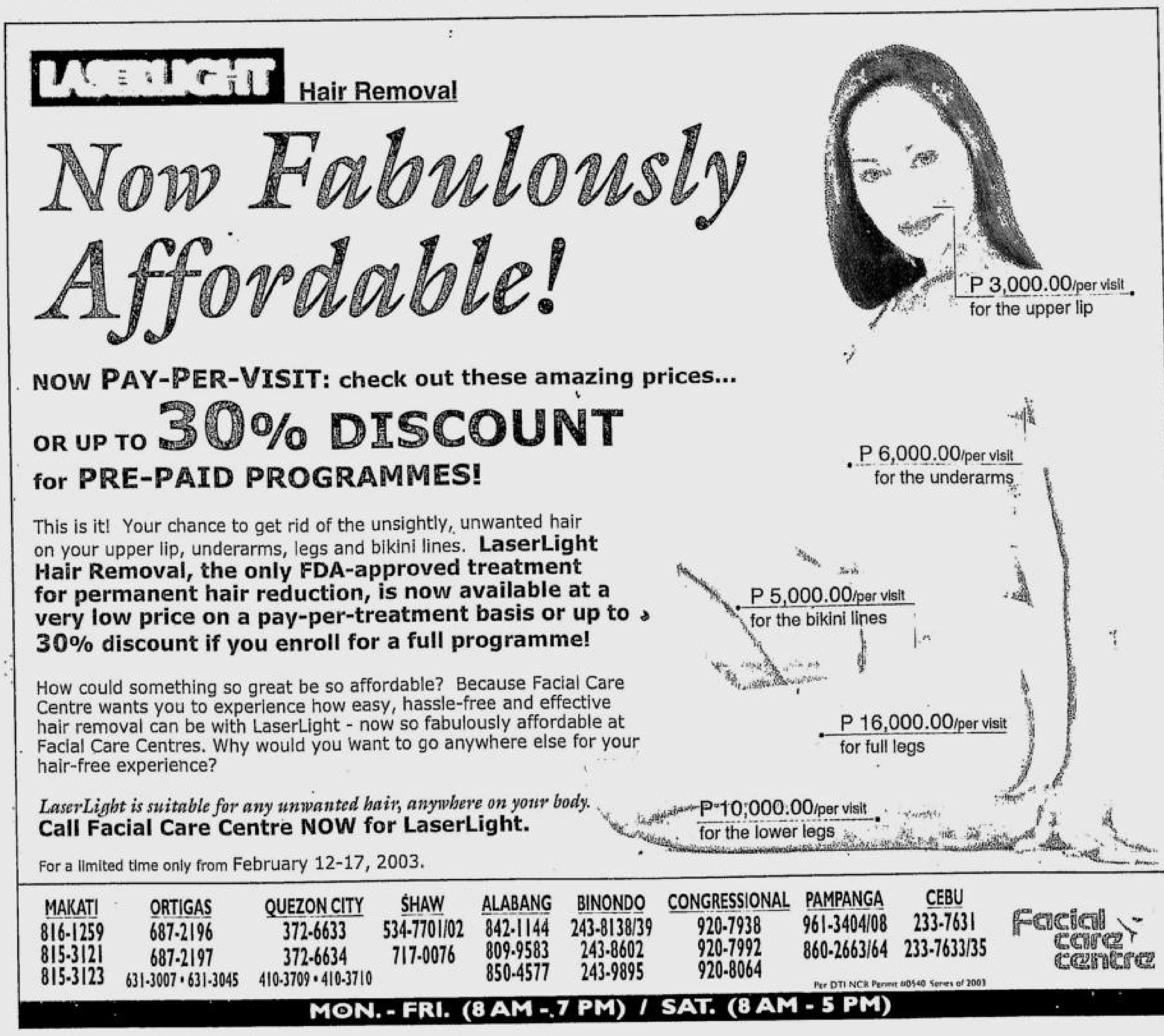
Call 825-7190, 826-7718/1856 or visit the website at bamboo.diegocera.com.

UE Dance Troupe holds grand reunion

THE AWARD-WINNING University of the East Dance Troupe will hold a grand reunion on Feb. 22 at the Rembrandt Hotel in Quezon City. Past and present members of the Dance Troupe will relive their glory years as they gather in the spirit of fun and friendship.

Under the leadership of Gener Caringal, the UE group successfully depicted old and modern dances. Caringal will grace the reunion along with Arlene Dy-Maranan.

Call Cora Sakumura at (02) 913-76-97, (02) 913-42-84 and 0916-425-9114; Malou at (02) 852-65-64, (02) 852-65-46; and Gener Caringal at (02) 715-55-75.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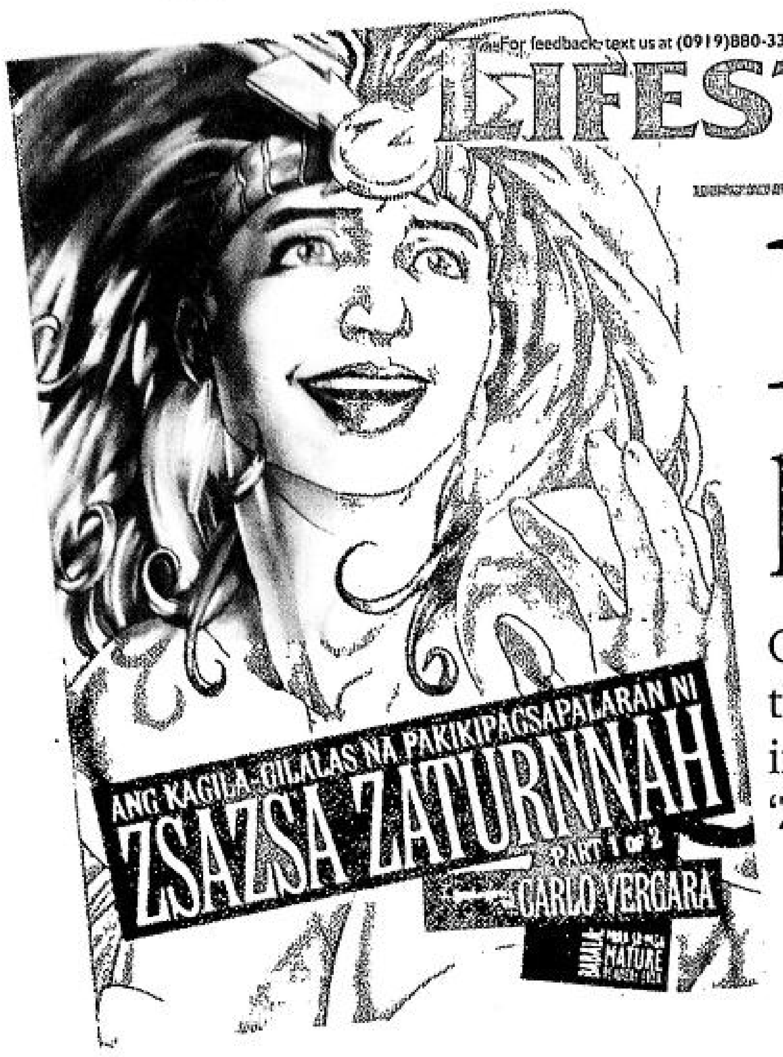

Darna ha ha ha!

Comic ace Carlo Vergara celebrates the iconic Pinoy super-heroine Darna in the smart and side-splitting parody 'Zsazsa Zaturnnah'

"Ang Kagila-gilalas na Pakikipagsapalaran ni Zsazsa Zaturnnah" # 1
By Carlo Vergara
Alamat Comics, Carverhouse Creations, and Quest Ventures, 2002, 65 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

REVIEW

NOW at the tip of a full-blown revival in comics and even dance, Darna has always been the most celebrated character in Philippine comicdom. From her inception by Mars Ravelo to her shepherding at the hands of Nestor Redondo and Jim Fernandez, the lame Narda has eternally captured the imagination of generations as the nondescript girl who, swallowing a magical stone, becomes the super-powered heroine. And ever since Rosa del Rosario first shouted the magic words "Darna!" in the 1951 serial all the way to Vilma Santos' "Lipad, Darna, Lipad" and subsequent turns by Nanette Medved and Anjanette Abayari, Darna has never really come back down to earth.

But top-notch comic creator Carlo Vergara's new comic book, "Ang Mga Kagila-gilalas na Pakikipagsapalaran ni Zsazsa Zaturnnah," recalls more the spirit of the 1979 Dolphy romp "Darna Kuno." In an homage that channels through the campy, dynamic essence of the Darna idea (not surprisingly, uniquely utilizing gay dialogue and humor), "Zsazsa" also features a man who turns into a superhero—but also a real woman, in this case.

With its hilarious word balloons and over-the-top antics, "Zsazsa" makes for an interesting follow-up to the critically lauded gay love story "One Night in Purgatory." In "Zsazsa," the hero/ine is perky beautician Ada (real name Adrian) who, while singing in the shower, gets bonked on the head by a magical stone that has fallen from the sky. True to form, Ada, upon swallowing the stone (which, fittingly enough, looks to be the size of a minor coral reef), becomes the buxom superbabe Zsazsa Zaturnnah.

Bad guys

Initially, Zsazsa thinks about becoming a circus performer to make some money but then, inevitably, she encounters some bad guys. So she has to save the day in a skimpy outfit with requisite perils. Together with slapstick-prone best buddy Didi (instead of a young ward named Ding) and a muscular object of affection, Dodong, Zsazsa faces off with familiar Pinoy antagonists like a giant frog and zombies (any Pinky Montilla fans out there?) in this first of two issues.

The black-and-white illustrations display Vergara's trademark realistic style. But he has now jazzed it up with cartoony

DARNA/ F2

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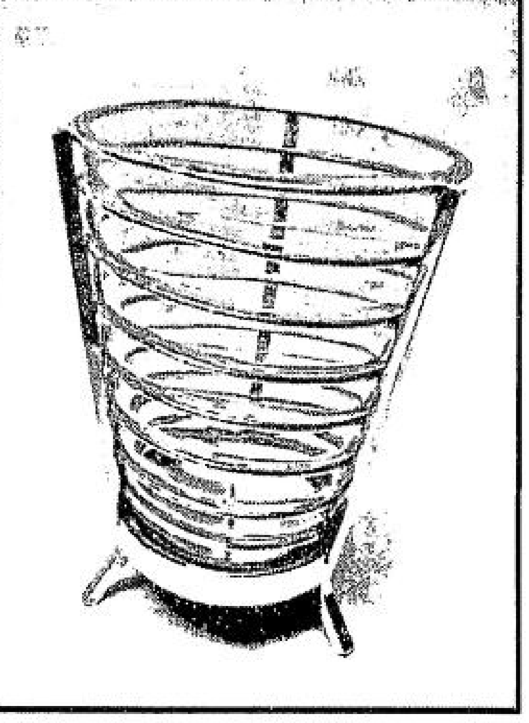

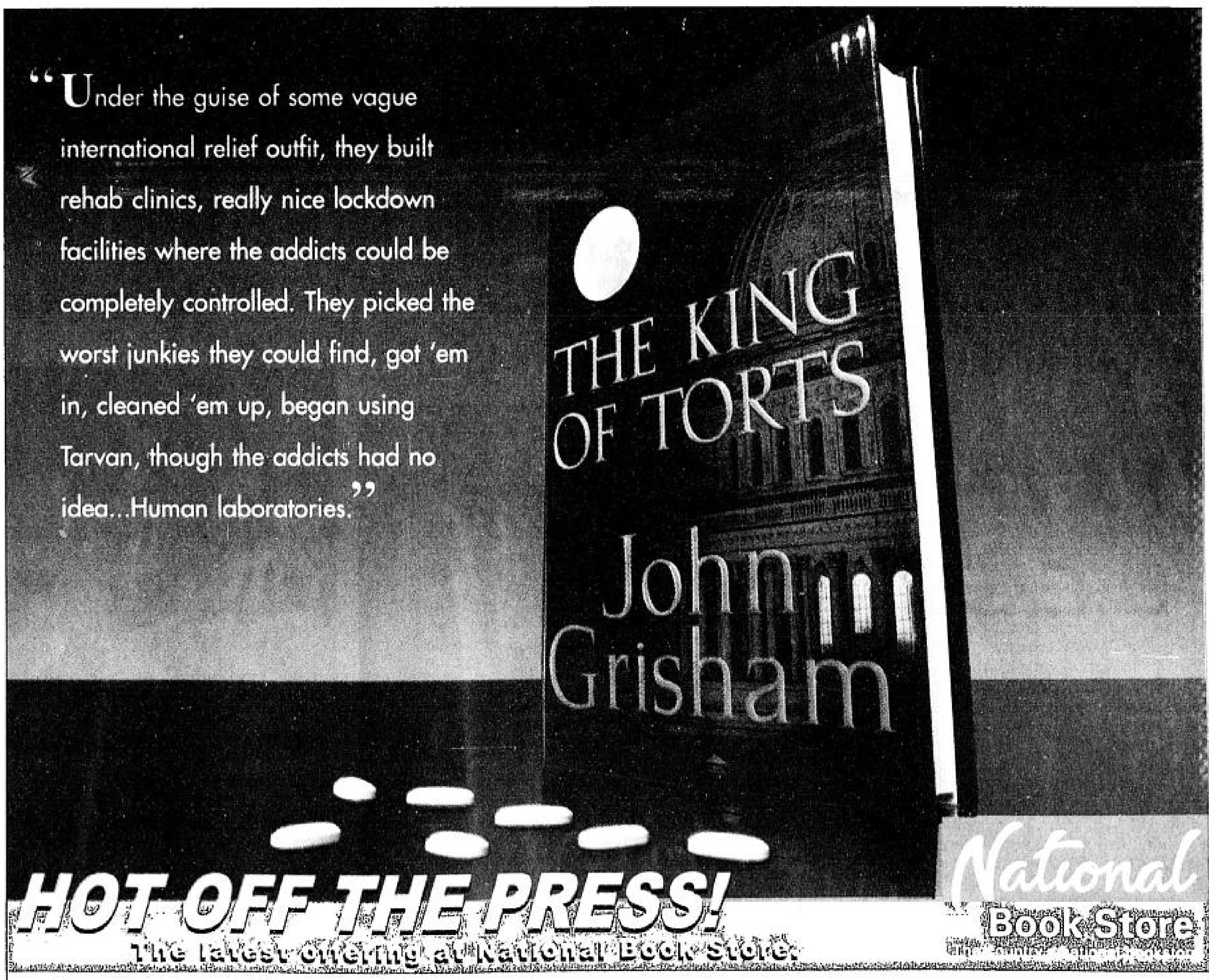

"Under the guise of some vague international relief outfit, they built rehab clinics, really nice lockdown facilities where the addicts could be completely controlled. They picked the worst junkies they could find, got 'em in, cleaned 'em up, began using Tarvan, though the addicts had no idea...Human laboratories."

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John Grisham

The office of the public defender is not known as a training ground for bright young litigators. Clay Carter has been there too long and dreams of a better job in a real firm. When he agrees to defend a man charged with what seems to be another senseless murder common on the streets of D.C., he unknowingly signs on for the case of a lifetime.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR
John Grisham is one of the masters of the modern legal thriller. He began writing as a hobby—squeezing in work for his first novel in between his legal practice and court recesses. Today, his works have been translated to 29 languages. Six of his novels have been turned into films.

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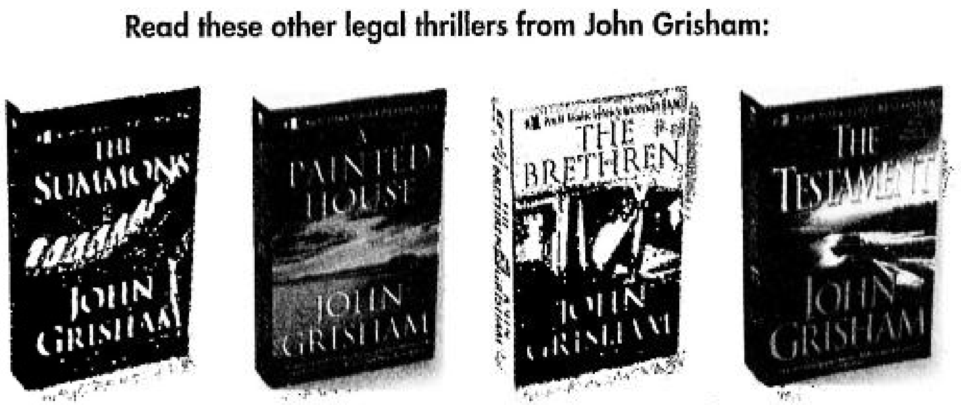
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Other bestselling titles include The Street Lawyer, The Partner, The Runaway Jury, The Rainmaker, The Chamber, The Client, The Pelican Brief, The Firm, and A Time to Kill.

Tune in to "Off the Shelf" on WinK-lite, February 21 from 2 to 2:30 p.m. and join the book discussion!

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The young and the aimless

A sensational novel by a 17-year-old greenhorn captures the decadence of American bratdom

"Twelve"
By Nick McDonnell
Grove Press, 2002

By James P. Ong
Contributor

REVIEW

THEY'RE young—they went to grammar school, they carry fake identification cards to get into clubs. One is planning to go to Harvard for university, and if he doesn't get in, then to Dartmouth because "my grandfather gave them a science building."

They're rich—they live in multistory townhouses in the Upper East Side in New York. The boys wear Brooks Brothers overcoats and North Face parkas; the girls step into Jimmy Choo knee-high stiletto boots and carry Prada bags and use sex to get their way with men.

They're destined for something catastrophic. Left alone to nannies and maids by parents vacationing in far-away exotic places like Cancun, they either attend or throw talked-about parties that reflect their parents' opulence. They know no other future but tomorrow's alcohol and drugs.

It is five days to New Year's Eve, "all of the kids are home from boarding school and everyone has money to blow," and in the center of their world is White Mike—an acutely intelligent but very lonely drug dealer still aching from the loss of his mother, who's taking a year off college.

He doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, doesn't do drugs. He remembers the number of the cab he rides every time, in case he leaves something behind.

YOUNG novelist Nick McDonnell

"What do you want," asks White Mike. "Because if you don't want something, you've got nothing. You are adrift, you are washed away, and then buried under the snow and shadows. And when, in the spring, the snow melts, no one will remember where you were frozen and buried, and you will no longer be anywhere."

Fictional drug

This is the milieu captured in "Twelve," a sensational novel written by a 17-year-old author. The title refers to a fictional drug that White Mike deals. It's white powder, but it's not cocaine.

When Jessica, a soccer and swimming jock, takes her first hit, everything changes. "Her fine eyebrows arch up above her eyes and her mouth opens. She sits down heavily into the toilet and leans back. She feels that tingling. Chills down that spine." And it reminds her of the Gettysburg Address, which she read about in her advanced-placement American history class.

When she does another hit, "the tingling gets fuller and goes from her spine into the back of her head. She locks her knees and tightens her buttocks and rests the back of her head on the top of the tank. A huge grin breaks out over her face, and the colors of the bathroom dance in her vision…"

She passes out.

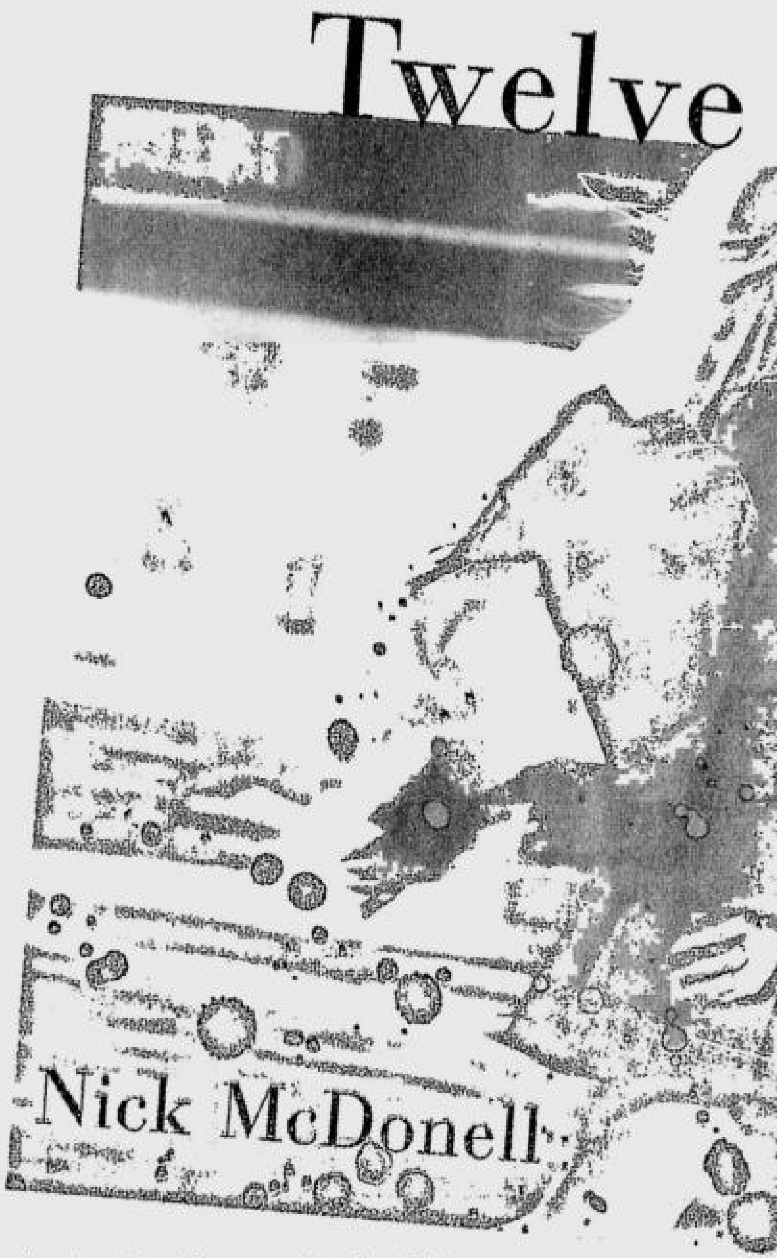
Surprise ending

That same drug is what Jessica wants to bring to the party on New Year's Eve planned by Sara Ludlow, "long legs, large breasts, blond hair, blue eyes, high cheekbones."

Ludlow is throwing the party in the house of Chris (who worries about his pimples and the fact that he's still a virgin), to seal her reputation as "the hottest girl at her school by, like, a lot."

But in the lead-up to the party, Charlie, White Mike's cousin who also deals drugs, gets gunned down by his supplier, who has found out that Charlie has been taking the drugs and doesn't have the money to pay for it.

The wrong person gets arrested for the murder.



Claude, Chris' brother, an ex-drug addict, buys himself a samurai and an Uzi and locks himself in his bedroom for days, transfixed by the power to annihilate that his latest acquisitions have.

Jessica, a virgin, resorts to paying for her drugs by promising a drug dealer two rounds of sex.

By the time New Year's Eve party starts rolling, Chris' five-story apartment is turned into an open-house, packed with all the novel's characters, brought together by drugs, alcohol and the promise of sex.

They're having fun, until the surprise ending that will leave you, the reader, with a chill down your spine.

As if you took the drug yourself.

Young fictionist's 'Testament' to be launched on Feb. 20

ANVIL Publishing and the Department of Literature of De la Salle University will launch "Testament and Other Stores" by Katrina Tuvera on Feb. 20, 4 p.m., at the Ariston Estrada Seminar Room at DLSU, Taft Avenue, Manila.

"Tuvera renders characters who are too real for comfort, who make us confront our own humanity with the questions that scare us," said University of the Philippines teacher Isabelita Reyes. "She accomplishes a rare universality and depth; on the one hand, she offers clarity of insight on Pinoy culture and our psyche. We read her stories and cannot help but be moved."

Tuvera has won the Palanca and Philippine Graphic awards for fiction. She has received fellowships from the Hedgebrook Retreat for Women Writers in Washington and the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire.

"Testament and Other Stories" is available at National Book Store.

Telephone directory cover art winners known

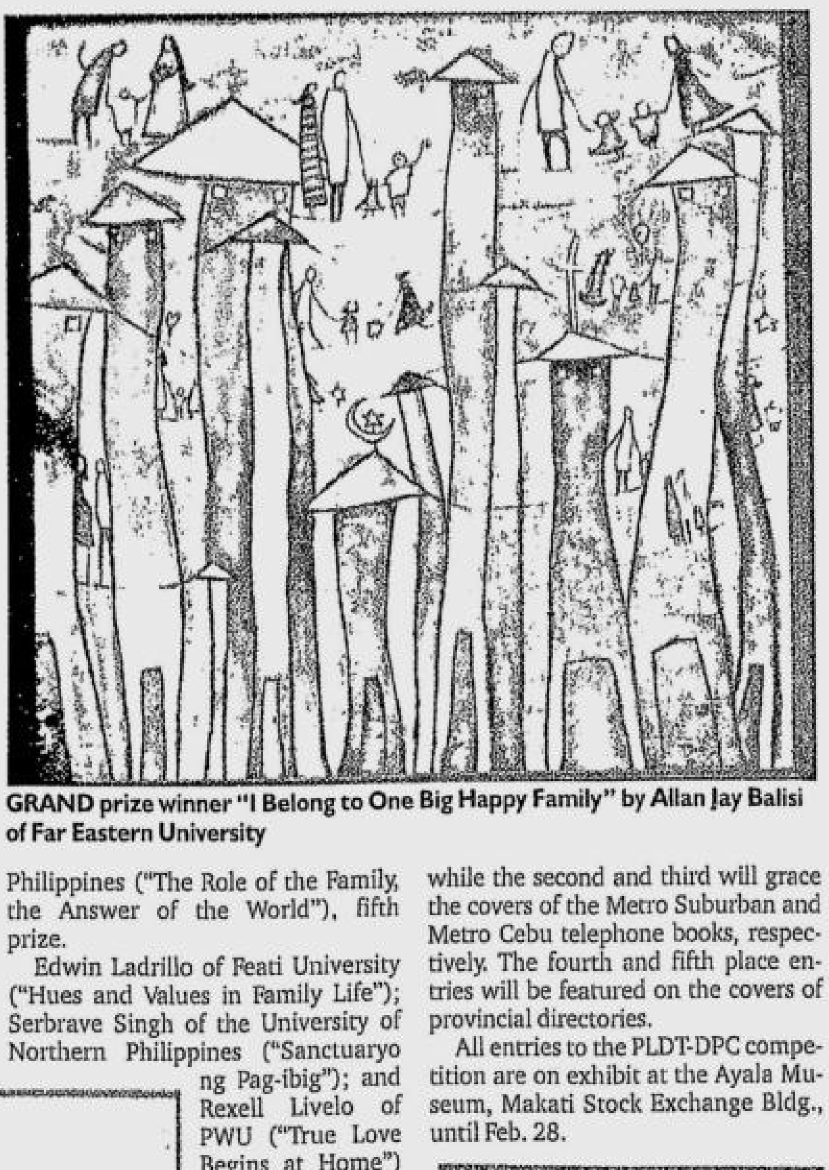
FAR EASTERN University art student Allan Jay Balisi bested 63 other entries from 22 schools all over the country to win the 2003-2004 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directory Cover 17th Visual Art National Competition with his entry, "I Belong To One Big Happy Family." Balisi received P60,000 and a trophy.

Judges, led by Cultural Center of the Philippines chair Baltazar Endriga, described Balisi's 29"x29" entry rendered in oil as "a very powerful visual work of art." Jointly sponsored by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Directories Philippines Corp., this year's contest carried the theme, "The Family."

The other judges were educators Regina Cruz and Paul Zafaralla, and artists Roy Veneracion and BenCab.

Robert Nelson Besana of Philippine Women's University was second with "The Solid Family: Fruition into a Solid Society," a 29"x29" mixed-media entry, while Eric Velasco of Bulacan State University was in third with "Isang Puso, Isang Isip, Isang Bansa, Buong Mundo… Iisang Pamilya."

Besana received P50,000 and a trophy and Velasco received P40,000 and a trophy.



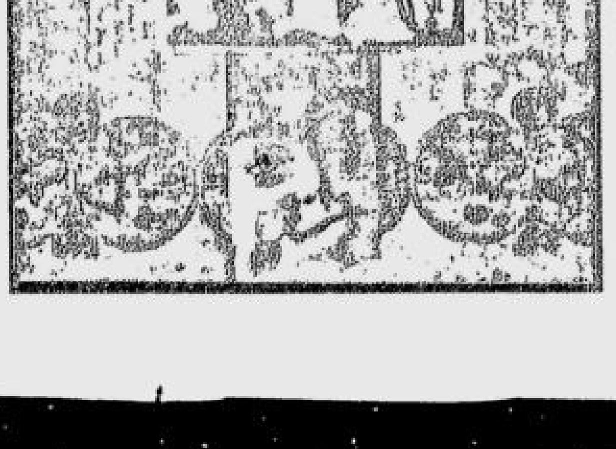
GRAND prize winner "I Belong to One Big Happy Family" by Allan Jay Balisi of Far Eastern University

Other winners were Joven Mahsit of University of the Philippines ("Family Tree"), fourth prize; and Lynryd Arwyn Villanueva Paras of Technological University of the Philippines ("The Role of the Family, the Answer of the World"), fifth prize.

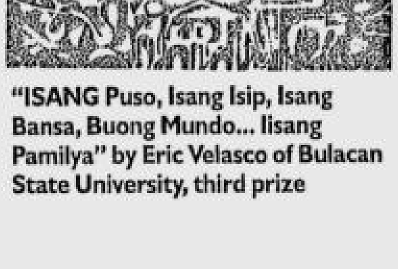
Edwin Ladrillo of Feati University ("Hues and Values in Family Life"); Serbrave Singh of the University of Northern Philippines ("Sanctuaryo ng Pag-ibig"); and Rexell Livelo of PWU ("True Love Begins at Home") were first, second and third honorable mentions, respectively.

The grand prize winner will be on the cover of the PLDT-DPC 2003-2004 Metro Manila telephone directory while the second and third will grace the covers of the Metro Suburban and Metro Cebu telephone books, respectively. The fourth and fifth place entries will be featured on the covers of provincial directories.

All entries to the PLDT-DPC competition are on exhibit at the Ayala Museum, Makati Stock Exchange Bldg., until Feb. 28.



"THE SOLID Family: Fruition into a Solid Society" by Robert Nelson Besana of PWU, second prize



"ISANG Puso, Isang Isip, Isang Bansa, Buong Mundo… Iisang Pamilya" by Eric Velasco of Bulacan State University, third prize

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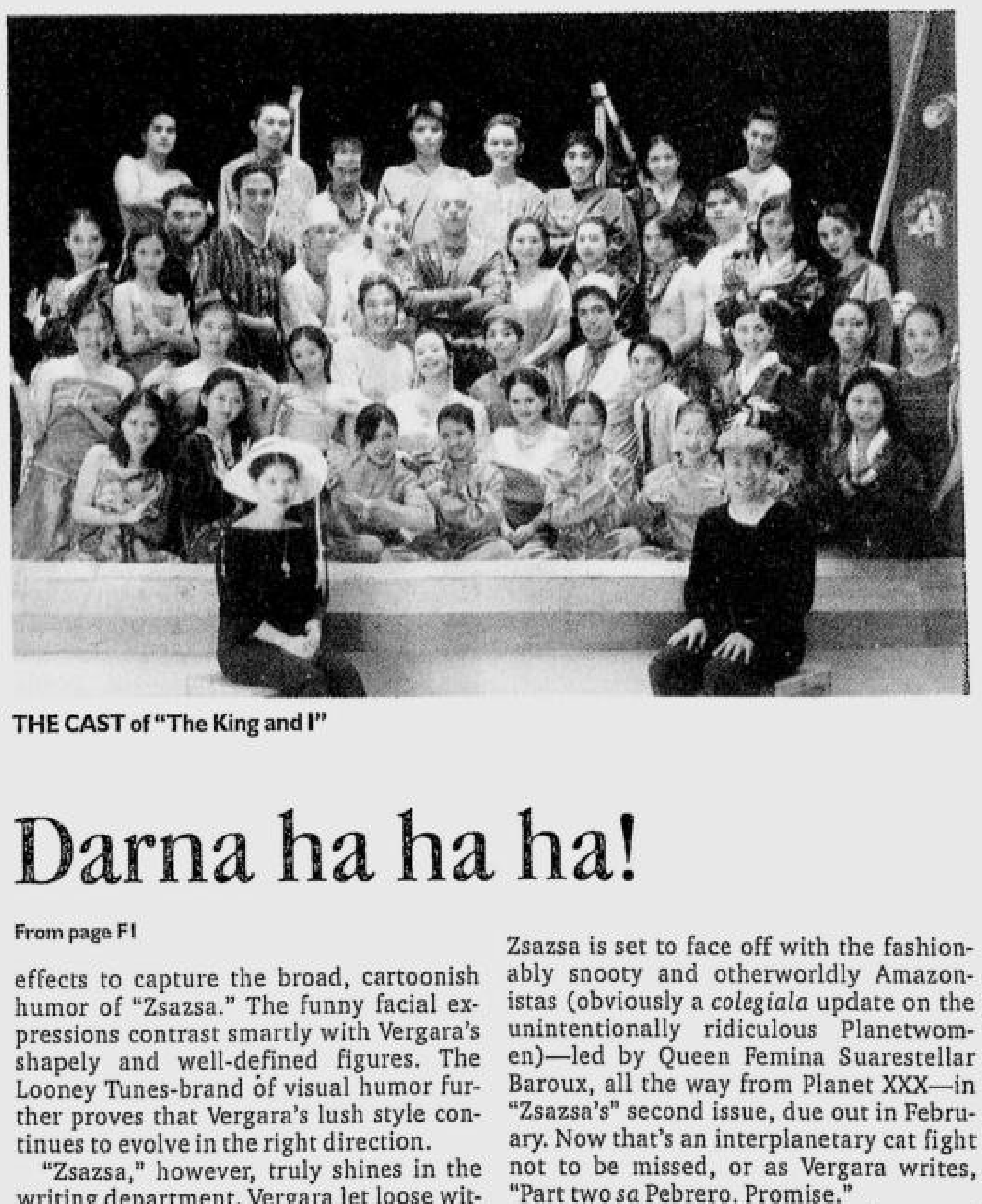
FEU stages 'King and I'

AS PART of the diamond jubilee celebration of the Far Eastern University, the FEU President's Committee on Culture presented the musical "The King and I" by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II last Feb. 12 and 13 at the FEU Auditorium.

Featuring a mixed student-faculty cast headed by Melvin Brito as the King and Maricel Alcantara and Natalie RhoAnn Wee alternating as Anna, the musical was directed by Normita Cadiz and Geofferson Ting, both Mass Communication faculty members, with PCC executive director Dr. Rustica C. Carpio as production supervisor and Michael S. Victoria as production manager.

Based on the book "Anna and the King of Siam" by Margaret Landon, the play presents the life of the English schoolteacher Anna Leonowens and her son Thompson in the court of King Mongkut.

Other members of the cast were Agnes Garett Joy Lunar as Kralahome, Serafin Serge Paguiligan as Prince Chulalongkorn, Jimmy Buena and Davin Nadal, alternating as Louis Leonowens, Anthony James Barcena and Nimrod Omega Mopera as Lady Thiang, Ma. Karla Fel Sison as Princess Ying Yaowalak, Christine Lou Binondo as Lun Tha, Jhonel Namayan and Bryan Luther Sadsad as Sir Edward Ramsay, Reggy Figer as Captain Orton, Michael Jay Cruz as the Interpreter.



THE CAST of "The King and I"

Darna ha ha ha!

From page F1

effects to capture the broad, cartoonish humor of "Zsazsa." The funny facial expressions contrast smartly with Vergara's shapely and well-defined figures. The Looney Tunes-brand of visual humor further proves that Vergara's lush style continues to evolve in the right direction.

"Zsazsa," however, truly shines in the writing department. Vergara let loose witty and very gay dialogue for "Zsazsa" to excellent effect. After all, the book itself boasts the disclaimer: "For mature readers ever." Ada/Zsazsa and Didi have the best lines and scenes. While this does serve as a pretty accurate warning that there are many off-color references in "Zsazsa," it should also herald the coming of one of the funniest Filipino comic books ever, with repartee that is both smart and sassy, but one that is obviously meant for an older audience. Beyond that, it's not just a really funny gay story, but a funny and great comic book, period.

Cat fight

After the pitched battle with zombies, Zsazsa is set to face off with the fashionably snooty and otherworldly Amazonistas (obviously a *colegiala* update on the unintentionally ridiculous Planetwomen)—led by Queen Femina Suarestellar Baroux, all the way from Planet XXX—in "Zsazsa's" second issue, due out in February. Now that's an interplanetary cat fight not to be missed, or as Vergara writes, "Part two *sa* Pebrero. Promise."

Flying way from the fantasy element of a gay man actually turning into an Amazonian archetype, "Zsazsa" is in essence the counterpoint to the unabashedly sentimental, emotional quality of "Purgatory." This new title from Vergara celebrates the joyfully vibrant, sincerely funny aspects of gay culture down to the language and references. Both visually and orally, "Zsazsa" is fresh proof that Vergara continues to grow as a formidable comic book talent-and someone who does not shy away from depicting different aspects of gay life in his chosen artistic field.

All together now: "Za-za-Zaturnnah!"

Available at all Comic Quest branches.

The Subidos' poetic conversations

By Ruby Villavicencio Paurom
Contributor

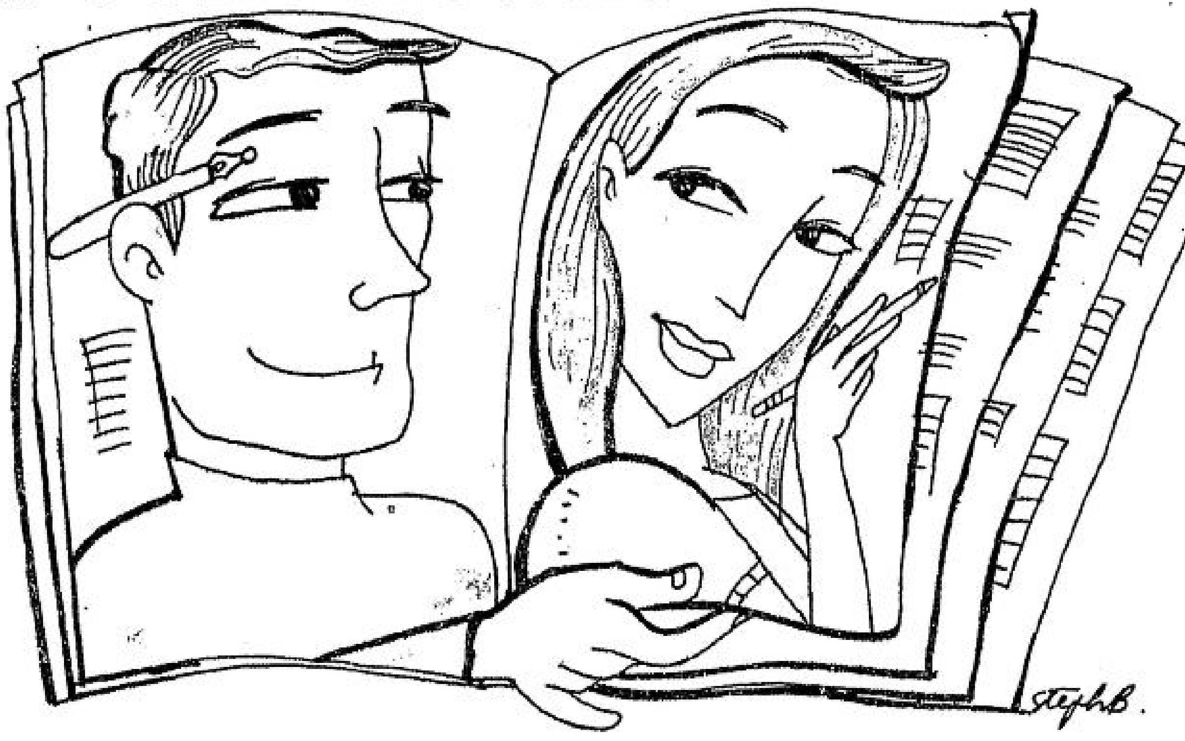


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

"RISE from your dreams: I bring you love more sweet than all the flowers I scatter at your feet."

Abelardo Subido's words may rouse most women from deep slumber, but not the love object of this 21-year-old poet in his piece "Soft Night" written in 1933.

Rather than be taken by his command, Trinidad Tarrosa replies two years later, at 23, with a tender yet tough intensity:

Love me not long, most dearly beloved, but much...
Time lends no fairer touch
Nor added fire to love, nor brighter glow.
Rather than watch it linger, waning slow...
Let it, O love, in glorious fullness, die.

Amid an exchange of sonnets and poetry forms, Abelardo and Trinidad Subido find expression for their inner stirrings which began when they first met in a Botany class at the University of the Philippines in 1932.

The courtship blooms in the pre-war poetry pages of national magazines and in UP's official organ, the Philippine Collegian.

A case of one following the other, or probably simply as mandated by the Muses, they succeed each other as literary editors of the Collegian.

The literary flair would gain adult-life dimensions as the couple converges and diverges in their careers, with literature and printed works providing the convergent points. Abelardo proceeds to law school and later occupies posts as chief of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission and as Civil Service commissioner under President Diosdado Macapagal.

Trinidad Tarrosa stays longer in the literary circle. With the gift of rhythm flowing like the gift of music to her grandparents, she writes poems adjudged by literary circles as "best poems." Her published works gains her entry to the elite UP Writers Club, and later to the roster of Who's Who in the Philippines.

The piece "Night" etches her name as the first Filipino poet ever to be published in an American publication—Funk and Wagnall's The Literary Digest. She is remembered by many high-school students for her translation of Jose Rizal's "Mi Ultimo Adios."

In 1945, she and her husband get into the world of social and political realities through journalism. In March that year, they set up the Manila Post, the country's first English language newspaper. But fire redirects their lives from daily deadline-beating.

Fire razes the Manila Post publishing office in 1947, a few days after its fire insurance papers expired. A neighboring office, the Fookien Times, rises from the ashes.

But love is good and its expression flourishes. They have six children, and a legacy of poetry that has made Philippine literature richer.

Legacy

This legacy of poems likewise brings the subject, love, to another level of dissection—pierced, opened, bled and sutured—not to bring the subject to a state of lifelessness but to one which quivers and intoxicates.

At 34, in 1946, Tarrosa writes two "Sonnets After Dark." Putting D.H. Lawrence's prose to shame, she writes with eroticism:

Love, it is evening, and the hour is still.
The shades seduce—and find my spirit frail,
Wherefore I flush with sense of shame until
You tremble, too... You tremble and you fail.
Your mouth is moist, and mine beneath is wet;
You hold me and your touch radiates a fire.

Abelardo, who passed away in 1979, and Trinidad, 15 years later in 1994, live again in the pages of these twin books recently launched by Milestone Publication Inc. (tel. 564-4473).

First launched by their heirs was Tarrosa's "Private Edition: Sonnets and Other Poems." In rites at the UP Library, her book was presented together with the donation of the couple's manuscripts and memorabilia.

Daughter Kristina, a museologist and art critic, writes in the preface that "Private Edition" is an expanded version of Tarrosa's own compilation in 1989, bearing the same title, "Private Edition: Sonnets and Other Poems."

Both books are made on the author's own selections of their works.

"Sonnets from a Gardener and Other Poems" by Abelardo, launched last month at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, is based on the author's own privately bound manuscript. Most of the poems were written in his last years at the UP College of Liberal Arts. An introduction to the book is provided by Edilberto Alegre.

An exhibition on their life and works, "A Literary Couple," was mounted by Milestone, also at the NCCA. It was a first-of-its-kind visual treatment of a literary subject.

In the NCCA launch, Alegre and his wife, Joyce Dorado, rendered a poetic conversation between the literary couple, reflecting the poet-persona of Abelardo as the "gardener" and of Tarrosa as the "pagan."

The excerpts chosen by the Alegres clearly drove home his point that "a good poem is never exhausted. A good poet keeps us conversing with the past."

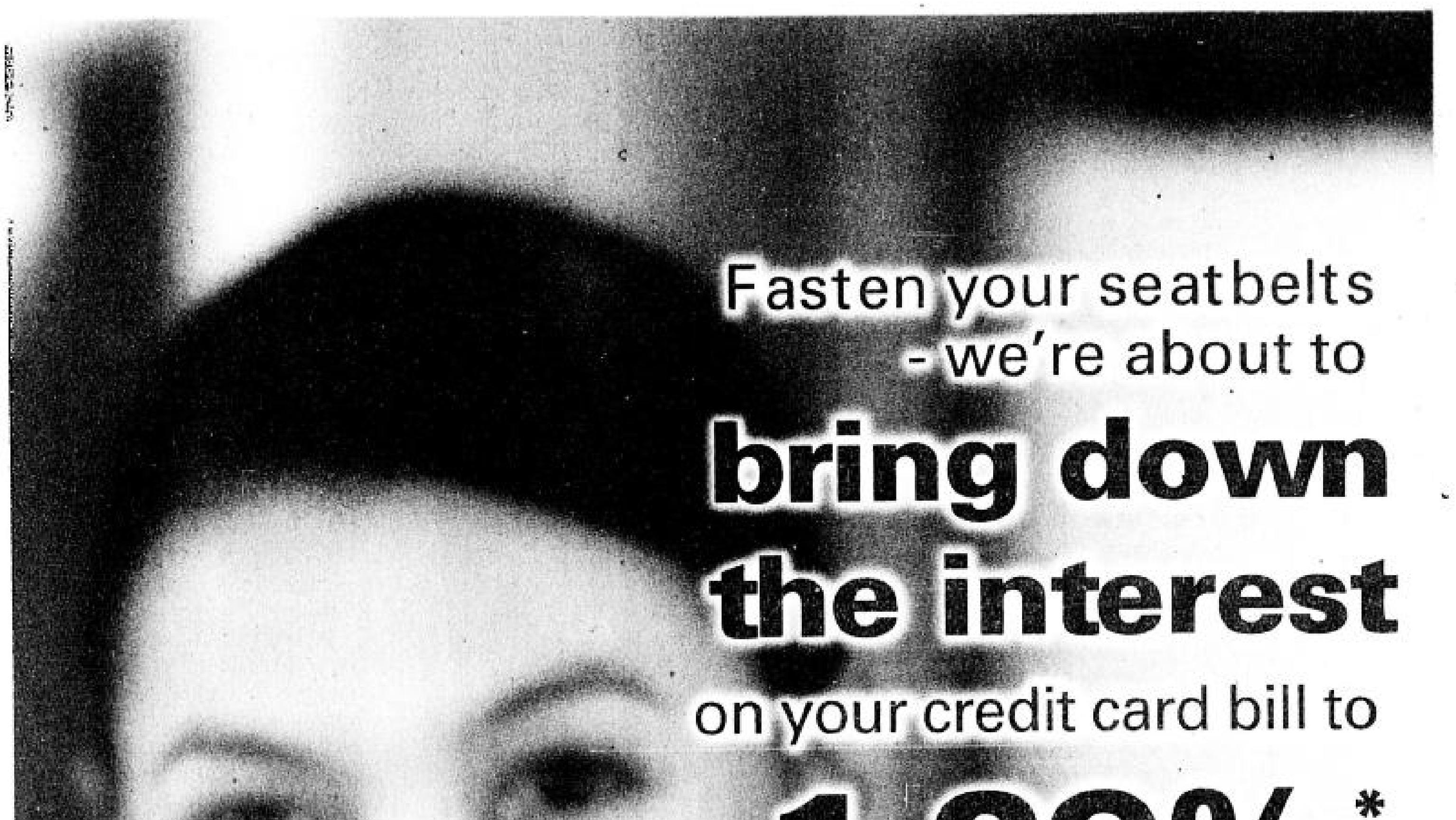
"The dialogue is forever," Alegre declared.

Even in the physical absence of Tarrosa's husband, who died years ahead of her, she continued her dialogue in her last sonnet (1980):

And I remain in solitary sorrow,
The night too quiet and too loud the day:
Too like exile the long unknown tomorrow

Literary enthusiasts and academics can find the whole text of Alegre's "The Gardener and the Pagan: The Subidos of the UP" in the Jan. 15, 2003, issue of the BusinessWorld.

"Private Edition" and "Sonnets from a Gardener" are available at Solidaridad Bookshop, The CCP Shop, the Metropolitan Museum Bookshop, the Museum Shop (Glorietta and SM Southmall) and at Likha Diwa sa Gulod on the UP campus.



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Photographing the Filipina: Beyond the clichés

By Alex Y. Vergara

COFFEE-TABLE books on women are a dime a dozen, often depicting them as glamorous creatures with flawless skins and hardly a strand of misplaced hair. Not if Supply Oilfield Services, Inc., a Philippine-based French company that services the energy industry, can have its way.

On the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 2004, SOS has launched "Filipinas-A Tribute to the Philippine Woman." It comes in the heels of "Philippines: Archipelago of Smiles," its first foray into book publishing, which reportedly remains one of the best-selling coffee-table books in the country today.

"We've so far sold 11,000 copies of the first book," said Frenchman Louis-Paul, SOS chair and CEO, "9,000 in English, 2,000 in French. The book's profit went to charity."

The new book is intended to be a collection of pictures of women shot in their "natural" environment, reflecting as much as possible the wide physical, social and cultural and spiritual diversity of Filipinas.

"There are no age limits," said book coordinator Helene Ratier, a Frenchwoman of Cambodian ethnicity. "The more diverse the women's backgrounds are, the better as long as the subjects are Filipinas. Too bad I can't pose as a subject."

To achieve this vision, SOS has recently launched a photo contest that will culminate in the selection of the top 25 winners sometime in June. Among the judges are former tourism secretary Gemma Cruz-Araneta, photographer George Tapan and French ambassador to the Philippines Renée Veyret.

SOS chair and CEO Louis-Paul Heusaff with daughters Vanessa and Solenn

PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

BOOK coordinator Helene Ratier

Photographers, both amateur and professional, are welcome to join the contest. They have until 12 noon of May 17 to submit their entries. A contestant can enter as many pictures as he/she likes as long as each entry tackles a specific subject. Even old and published photos may be entered provided that such efforts have the blessings of their respective publishers.

Prizes include round-trip tickets to France, cash awards, Nokia handsets and Nikon and Olympus cameras and accessories. A Konica Special Award will be given to the best photo using Konica film and Konica "Golden Dragon" paper. Contestants, however, are free to use whatever film and photo paper they want.

"Why publish a book about women?" Heusaff posed this question to his audience during the launch. "Because I prefer girls from guys. I don't think I will ever do a book on men."

But seriously, Heusaff should know the subject well. He has been based in the Philippines for 25 years, and is married to a Filipina. Daughters Vanessa and Solenn also graced the launch at the Manila Polo Club.

"There are plenty of books on women," he added. "But not a few of them are limited to glamour. What about our *lolas*, our *nanays*, the nurse in the States, the security guard on duty, the policewoman who constantly braves traffic and pollution? All of them deserve a place in this book."

So, you think your mother, your wife or your daughter would make for an interesting subject? Their images may yet be immortalized in SOS's latest title.

For inquiries, call Helene Ratier at 817-89-19 loc. 1969 or Rose Policarpio local 2015 or e-mail your questions to filipinas.book@sos.com.ph

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Second-week love-text poetry winners bared

THE NUMBER of entries in the Textanaga Poetry Writing Contest doubled on its second week. Virgilio S. Almario, chairperson of the board of judges, said, "The more than 2,000 entries showed a happy mix of serious and witty texts."

The prize money of P5,000 and the title "Textanagista ng Linggo" are shared by young poets Don Clarence Cruz of the University of the Philippines and E.J. C. Galang of the Ateneo de Manila University.

Here are the two prize-winning *tanagas*:

Puto lang ako, sinta-
May init ng bibingka,
Tamis ng maja blanca,
Sapin-saping ligaya.
—Don Clarence Cruz

Nag-almusal mag-isa,
Kaning lamig, tinapa;
Nahulog ang kutsara
Ikaw na sana, sinta.
—E.J. C. Galang

The consolation prizes, amounting to P 6,000, were divided among the following:

Ang bisig ay linaslas,
Nagpiga rin ng dayap,
Magdamag na nangarap
Ng sandali mong sulyap.
—Mylene Tordesillas

Kahit trapik ay sagad,
Mga taksi ay isnab,
Di pa rin magiging mad,
Dahil di flat: ating lav.
—Amadeo Mendoza

Tinolang walang sabaw,
Bombilyang walang ilaw;
Dalagang walang dalaw,
Tulad kong walang ikaw.
—Teddy Corpuz

Sa pag-ihip ng hangin,
Ako ay napatingin
Sa malaking salamin,
Luha ko'y papahirin.
—Jarvis Buluran

Kapag biglang suminsin
Ang ngiti mo sa akin,
Ako ma'y mujahedin,
Mapapa-Ama Namin!
—Joselito de los Reyes

Ganda mo'y tumutudla
Sa pusong humahanga,
Subalit lumuluha
Langit ka, ako'y lupa.
—Jun Cruz

Awarding ceremonies will be on March 17, 2 p.m., at the Vargas Museum, UP Diliman, QC.

Participants on the third-week phase may text entries with their names and addresses from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at (0919) 317-5708 and/or (0916) 730-2695. Call Salvador "Badong" Biglaen at 922-1830.

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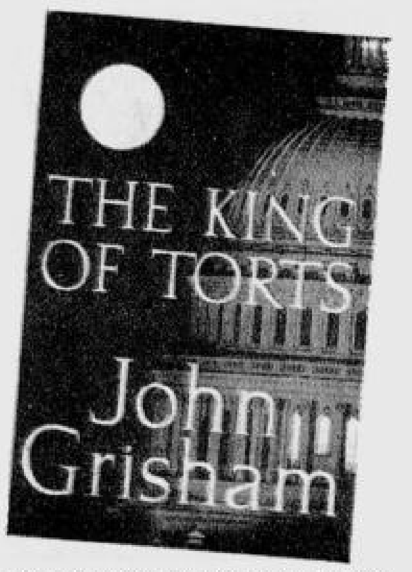

NEW GRISHAM NOVEL OUT
John Grisham's newest novel, "The King of Torts," is now available at National Bookstore. It features Clay Carter, a disillusioned lawyer who stumbles on a conspiracy. What follows is an electrifying courtroom drama

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Non-fiction must-reads

POWERBOOKS recommends the following:

"The Book of Home Design" by Anoop Parikh

Anoop Parikh shows you how to be an interiors expert in this beautifully crafted, all-new manual of home design. Inspiring photographs and practical information allow you to unravel the mysteries of room layout, lighting and furniture combinations to create a home that is uniquely yours.

"Built to Last" by James Collins and Jerry Porras

James Collins and Jerry Porras examirie 18 exceptional and long-lasting companies, such as General Electric, Disney, Hewlett-Packard, and Procter & Gamble, and compare each with one of its closest but less successful competitor, in order to discover their edge over their rivals. Their findings can be applied by managers at all levels. The new final chapter looks at the implications of the Internet.

"Strategic Marketing Management" by Mark E. Parry

"Strategic Marketing Management" outlines a customer-based marketing program designed to help you identify your most attractive target customers. With common-sense explanations of how and why certain methods work, along with current examples of techniques companies have used to apply these methods successfully (and unsuccessfully), this book shows you how to determine: what makes your company, product, or service special to current and potential customers; what position you should establish and nurture in order to create sustained competitive strategy; and strategies to strengthen and defend that position.

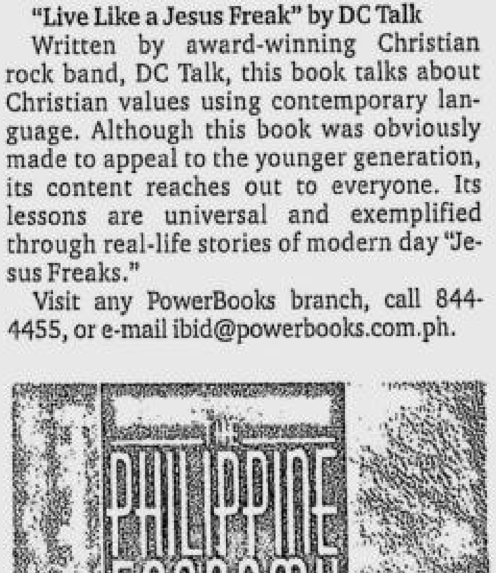
"Confidence: How to Succeed at Being Yourself" by Alan Loy McGinnis

Can you gain more self-confidence? Can you change? "Yes," says Dr. McGinnis. You can get rid of many negative attitudes. You can gain a health self-confidence. Discover how you can build inner strength, handle rejection, develop your uniqueness, keep your flaws in perspective, make friends with your body, find a place to excel, expand your network of love, and help others become more confident.

"Live Like a Jesus Freak" by DC Talk

Written by award-winning Christian rock band, DC Talk, this book talks about Christian values using contemporary language. Although this book was obviously made to appeal to the younger generation, its content reaches out to everyone. Its lessons are universal and exemplified through real-life stories of modern day "Jesus Freaks."

Visit any PowerBooks branch, call 844-4455, or e-mail ibid@powerbooks.com.ph.



THE BOOK "The Philippine Economy: Development, Policies, and Challenges," was launched recently. Jointly edited by Dr. Arsenio Balisacan, now undersecretary of agriculture, and Dr. Hall Hill of the Australian National University, "The Philippine Economy" is a collection of articles by local and international scholars and researchers analyzing various aspects of the economic situation. The Philippine edition of the book is published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press, in cooperation with Oxford University Press. It may be ordered through the Ateneo Press (tel. 426-5984; unipress@admu.edu.ph) or through National Bookstore (912-7135), Popular Bookstore (372-2162), Powerbooks (844-4455) and Solidaridad bookstore (523-0870).

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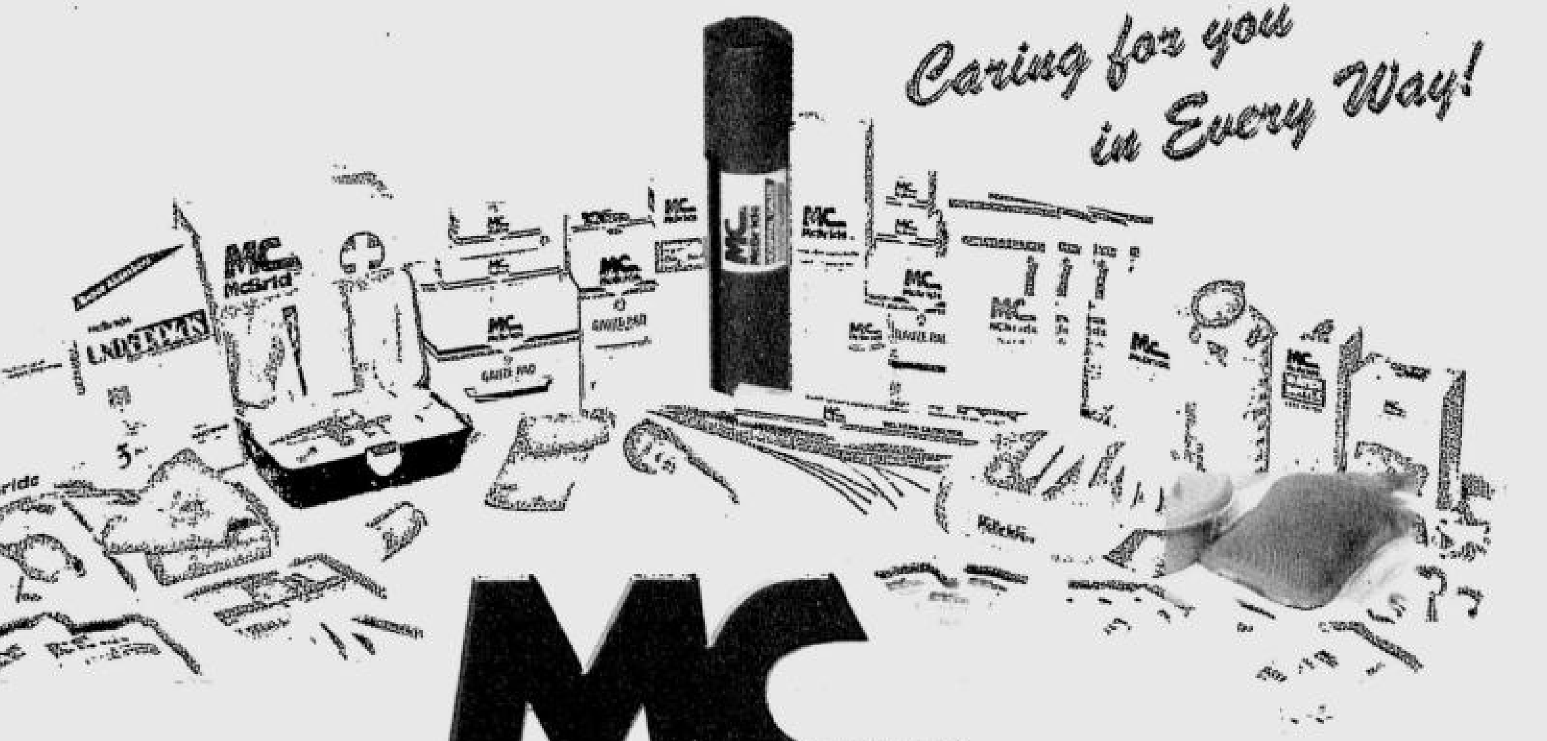

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